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Law and Loss: Response to Catastrophe in Numbers 15

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■ Introduction

The episode of the wood-gatherer (מקשש עצים) in Num 15:32–36 is concisely narrated. The Israelites, in the wilderness, catch a man gathering wood on the Sabbath. They convey him to Moses and the congregation, evidently for judgment, but they cannot determine what his fate should be. A watch is therefore set over him until the matter can be clarified. Then God, presumably in response to an inquiry by Moses, informs him that the prisoner is to be stoned. The congregation forthwith executes the judgment. The story is sharply demarcated, on the one side by the law concerning unintentional and intentional sins (15:22–31) and on the other by the law of tassels (15:37–41). The present essay offers an interpretation of this story that situates it meaningfully in its current literary context and in the historical milieu in which it was redacted. I shall argue that the episode of the wood-gatherer addresses the force of covenantal law in the aftermath of national catastrophe.

The wood-gatherer's case is one of four stories in the Pentateuch whose commonalities were perceived already in antiquity.¹ The other three are the cases of the blasphemer (Lev 24:10–23), the second Passover (Num 9:1–14), and the daughters of Zelophehad (Num 27:1–11). In each episode, an event gives rise to a legal question of first instance, to which God responds. There is, however, an

¹ See Simeon Chavel, "Law and Narrative in Four Oracular Novellae in the Pentateuch: Lev 24:10–23; Num 9:1–14; 15:32–36; 27:1–11" (Ph.D. diss.; Hebrew University, 2006) 1–2. My thanks to Simeon Chavel for making available to me the introduction and conclusion of his dissertation in draft form. The more extensive discussion of the wood-gatherer story in the third chapter of the completed dissertation reached me too late for it to be addressed in the body of the article, but I have cited to it where relevant. I thank him, as well as Steven Fraade, Christine Hayes, and David Lambert, for their incisive comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

important difference between the story of the wood-gatherer and the other stories. In the other three cases, God not only tells the Israelites what to do in the given situation, but also converts his decision into legislation of general applicability, on blasphemy and other aggressive offenses (Lev 24:15–22), on the Second Passover (Num 9:9–14), and on inheritance (Num 27:8–11).² Indeed, these narratives seem fashioned for the specific aim of grounding the laws into which they lead.³ The story of the wood-gatherer, however, issues in no general legislation. One is therefore left to wonder about the “point” of the story. The absence of new legislation seems, in fact, to undermine the basic narrative logic: If God has nothing new to legislate, the legal corpus already available to the Israelites should be sufficient to resolve the case, rendering oracular consultation unnecessary. Indeed, Moses could easily have concluded from prior laws that gathering material outside the camp constitutes forbidden Sabbath labor (Exod 16:27–29) and that violation of the labor prohibition merits death (Exod 31:14; 35:2).⁴

² See Meir Sternberg’s apt description (*Hebrews Between Cultures: Group Portraits and National Literature* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998] 534) in connection with the blasphemer story: “the ruling ascends in coverage from ad hominem particularity, alone necessitated by the action as such, to apodictic generality” (parentheticals omitted). For other instances in Numbers in which narrative provides the background to law, see Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 4; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 78–80.

³ See Chavel, “Law and Narrative,” 9–10.

⁴ According to a tradition attested both in Philo (*Vit. Mos.* 2.217) and rabbinic literature (*Sifra* Emor 14:5 [ed. I. H. Weiss (Vienna, 1862) 104b]; *Sifre Numbers* 114 [ed. Horowitz (Leipzig, 1917) 123]; *b. Sanh.* 78b), the unknown was the mode of execution. To the objections to this view raised by J. Weingreen (“The Case of the Woodgatherer,” *VT* 16 [1966] 361–64, at 362), we may add, first, that there was probably a general understanding well into the Second Temple period that the default form of execution was stoning (on which see Aharon Shemesh, *Punishments and Sins: From Scripture to the Rabbis* [in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes, 2003] 11–20), and second, that were this in fact the purpose of the episode, God should have stated a general rule that violation of the Sabbath is punishable by stoning, in keeping with the analogous cases. Weingreen proposes instead that the story introduces the notion, familiar from later rabbinic law as “fence for the Torah,” of prohibiting something harmless in itself because it might lead to full-fledged violation of the law. Anthony Phillips (“The Case of the Woodgatherer Reconsidered,” *VT* 19 [1969] 125–28) doubts that such a notion operated in the biblical period, and offers, more simply, that the question was whether gathering wood constituted labor for the purpose of Sabbath law. For further discussion see Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC; Leicester: InterVarsity, 1981) 131–32; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 100; Jacob Licht, *A Commentary on the Book of Numbers* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991) 93–94 [in Hebrew]; Klaus Grünwaldt, *Exil und Identität: Beschneidung, Passa und Sabbat in der Priesterschrift* (Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1992) 197–200 (for which reference I am indebted to Simeon Chavel); Bernard S. Jackson, *Wisdom-Laws: A Study of the Mishpatim of Exodus 21:1–22:16* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 428 n. 205, 440, 472–73; Chavel, “Law and Narrative,” 158–60, 168–70. A fourth possibility depends on the conclusion of Y. Gilat (להשתלשלותם של איסורי שבוע), *Megerei Talmud 2: Talmudic Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Professor Eliezer Shimshon Rosenthal* [ed. M. Bar-Asher and D. Rosenthal; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1993] 208–10 that R. Eliezer, who often preserves old, pre-rabbinic legal traditions, saw prohibited Sabbath labors as falling into two categories, one punishable by stoning and the other not subject to the death penalty. (On the common rabbinic view, by contrast, all prohibited Sabbath labors are punishable by stoning, and only additional rabbinic prohibitions are subject to lesser penalties.) If

To this fundamental problem we may add two others. First, the story begins by informing us that the Israelites were in the wilderness (יִהְיוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּמִּדְבָּר "and the Israelites were in the wilderness"). This information seems altogether superfluous, as the entire narrative of the Pentateuch, from Exodus 15 onward, occurs in the wilderness, and, while the Israelites approach close enough to Canaan by Numbers 13 to warrant the dispatch of advance scouts, Num 14:25 clearly indicates that they afterward retreat into the wilderness.⁵ Second, there is the problem of the story's position in the larger narrative.⁶ Strong expectations of coherence are not always suitable for the heavily redacted book of Numbers, to which at least three distinct sources (JE, P and H) made important contributions. The wood-gatherer story, however, seems particularly out of place, as it is immediately followed by the law of tassels (Num 15:37–41), which evokes the narrative of the spies in Numbers 13–14. According to Num 15:39, the Israelites are supposed to see (וּרְאִיתֶם) the tassels, and, thereby recall God's commandments. They will thus avoid "scouting out" (וְלֹא תַחְזֹרוּ) or "straying" (וְלֹא תִזְנוּ) adulterously after [with] their eyes (עֵינֵיכֶם). The tassels thus serve as an antidote to the sin of the spies, who, having scouted out the land (לַחְזֹר אַחֲרָהּ), and having seen (רָאִינוּ) tall men compared to whom they seemed, in their own eyes (בְּעֵינֵינוּ) as grasshoppers, discouraged the Israelites,

Gilat is correct, and if R. Eliezer's view was prevalent in the biblical period, we may suppose that the people knew that wood-gathering was prohibited on the Sabbath (*contra* Weingreen and Phillips), but did not know whether it was punishable by execution (i.e., stoning) or by a lesser penalty. God's response serves either to clarify the punishment for wood-gathering specifically, or, more fundamentally, to refute the view that lesser violations of Sabbath are not punishable by death. In any case, none of the above proposals explains why God's decision does not issue a general rule.

⁵ Philo (*Vit. Mos.* 2.214) suggests that the verse indicates how the wood-gatherer came to be discovered: some Israelites had left the camp and entered the wilderness in order to pray amid purity and silence. An awareness of the superfluity of the geographical marker may underlie the exegetical manipulation of the story's opening phrase in *Sifre Zuta Numbers* 15:32 (ed. Horowitz, 287). See also Chavel, "Law and Narrative" 176–82.

⁶ For a very ambitious explanation of the story's occurrence in Numbers, which does not, however, account for its particular position within the book, see David Noel Freedman, *The Nine Commandments: Uncovering a Hidden Pattern of Crime and Punishment in the Hebrew Bible* (with Jeffrey C. Geoghegan and Michael M. Homan; ed. Astrid B. Beck; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 47–57. The medieval commentator Abraham ibn Ezra (Num 15:2), and with him many contemporary scholars, e.g., G. B. Gray, (*Numbers* [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912] 182); Philip J. Budd (*Numbers* [WBC 5; Waco: Word Books, 1984] 175); Olivier Artus (*Etudes sur le livre des nombres. Récit, histoire et loi en Nb 13,1–20,13* [OBO 157; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997] 55), have suggested that the story serves to illustrate the preceding law (Num 15:30–31), which mandates excision for one who sins intentionally. I offer below a more complex account of the relationship between this law and the wood-gatherer story. Grünwaldt (*Exil*, 194–95) argues against a link to Num 15:30–31, and instead attributes the story's position to the fact that it takes place בַּמִּדְבָּר "in the wilderness" (Num 15:32); it was therefore conjoined to Num 14, in which the wilderness plays a central role. Is it just possible, alternatively, that the strikingly similar stories of the blasphemer and the wood-gatherer have been transposed? The characterization of the intentional sinner as מְגִדֵּף "blaspheming" in Num 15:30 provides a perfect transition to the blasphemer incident, while references to various forms of Sabbath in Lev 24:8 and Lev 25 *passim* provide a natural context for the sin of the wood-gatherer.

who strayed (זָנוּתֵיכֶם) from God and were punished (Num 13:32–33; 14:33).⁷ We may wonder what if any function the story of the wood-gatherer serves sandwiched between the story of the spies and the legislation that constitutes its antidote.

■ Literary Analysis

To a certain extent, these last two questions answer each other. The spies story is not merely one of many episodes that happen to take place in the wilderness. Rather, it assigns a new meaning to the wilderness period as a stage in Israelite history. Were it not for the Israelites' revolt in the aftermath of the spies incident, the wilderness would have been a waystation in the journey from Egypt to Canaan, as well as a site of divine revelation. With the crisis occasioned by the spies' mission, however, the wilderness acquires a darker valence, as a vehicle of punishment and death.⁸ The Israelites, reluctant to confront the nations of Canaan, express the wish to die *במדבר הזה* "in this wilderness" (14:2), and God, granting them this wish, decrees that they will indeed perish *במדבר הזה* "in this wilderness" (14:29, 32, 35). In this light, the notice that the story of the wood-gatherer occurs when the Israelites are *במדבר* "in this wilderness" seems pregnant with meaning.⁹

The Israelites respond to God's decree in a variety of ways. First they mourn it (14:39). Then they ignore it, and march, with unhappy results, on Canaan (14:40–44). I suggest that the story of the wood-gatherer should be understood as another response to the generation's punishment, one that, in the aftermath of the failed attempt to defy God's decree, emerges from the recognition that the Israelites of this generation are indeed "in the wilderness" and will not see the promised land.¹⁰ This raises the question as to whether the wilderness generation now stands outside the

⁷ See Jacob Milgrom, "Tassels," *Beth Mikra* 92 (1982) 14–22, at 16 [in Hebrew].

⁸ Previous narratives, most notably that of the Golden Calf (Exod 32), locate sequences of sin and punishment in the wilderness, but the wilderness, in these cases, plays only an incidental role, as setting. In the spies episode, by contrast, sin and punishment both directly implicate the wilderness. It may be argued that in light of the spies incident, the wilderness retroactively becomes a thematized element, an active factor, in the previous instances of sin and punishment. In the terms that Shemaryahu Talmon employs for his analysis of the wilderness *imaginaire* in the biblical period ("The Desert Motif in the Bible and in Qumran Literature," in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations* [ed. Alexander Altmann; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966] 31–63), the "transgression-and-punishment" theme crystallizes in Num 14. For thematizations of the wilderness motif in the post-biblical period, see Hindy Najman, "Toward a Study of the Uses of the Concept of Wilderness in Ancient Judaism," *DSD* 13 (2006) 99–113, and the literature she cites at 99 n. 1.

⁹ See Nahmanides's comment on Num 15:32: "To this section was attached the matter of the gatherer, because it occurred after the story of the spies, according to the plain sense. And this is the reason that it says, 'and the Israelites were in the wilderness,' because it was when the nation tarried there on account of the aforementioned decree that this incident happened."

¹⁰ The indication at the opening of the wood-gatherer story that the Israelites were in the wilderness may, on this analysis, be compared with Gen 11:1: *ויהי כל הארץ שפה אחת ודברים אחדים* "and all the land was of single tongue and single speech." As in Num 15:32, the narrator states a fact that the reader would otherwise have taken for granted because it provides relevant background for the events that follow.

covenant altogether. The wood-gatherer violates the law because he believes that the law no longer applies. Gathering wood on the Sabbath enacts the abrogation of the Sinai covenant especially vividly insofar as it suggests a reversion to the state of slavery in Egypt. Just as the Israelites in Egypt gathered straw to make bricks (Exod 5:7: וקששו להם חבן “and let them gather straw”; 5:12: לקשש קש לחבן “to gather stubble for straw”), so now the wood-gatherer gathers (מקשש) sticks, and he does so on the Sabbath, as though to confirm his status as slave to Pharaoh by denying himself the rest that he would be due as slave to God. With his forward movement toward Canaan stymied, the wood-gatherer symbolically turns backward to Egypt, just as the people advocated upon hearing the spies’ report: נתנה ראש ונשובה מצרימה “Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt” (Num 14:4).

Moses and his compeers do not know what to do. Their doubt concerns not the content of the law, but its applicability: Does the law, which would mandate death for labor on the Sabbath, remain in force, and enforceable, or has the wood-gatherer correctly understood the implications of God’s decree upon the wilderness generation? Does the total occlusion of Canaan indeed signal the end of Israel’s obligations toward God?¹¹ In my analysis of the story, although the wood-gatherer acts alone, he gives expression, through his action, to the doubt of the entire people. Their uncertainty about the wood-gatherer’s fate is equally uncertainty about their own circumstances. The Sabbath law, under which the wood-gatherer must die, is well known; the people wonder, rather, whether the wood-gatherer is correct in supposing that the law no longer carries force.¹²

The extent to which the entire people are implicated in the wood-gatherer’s act is clarified by a comparison with the case of the blasphemer, the wood-gatherer’s

¹¹ A body of legislation does intervene between the story of the spies in chapters 13–14 and the story of the wood-gatherer in 15:32–36. However, two of the three blocks of laws in this unit (15:1–16; 17–21) are explicitly said to apply only in “the land in which you will dwell” (15:2) or “the land to which I am bringing you” (15:18), so that they would have no direct bearing on the question of the legal status of the wilderness generation. On the third set of laws (15:22–31), see *infra*.

¹² After the current article was completed, I discovered that its basic approach was anticipated by Arnold B. Ehrlich in his *Mikrâ Ki-Pshutô: The Bible According to its Literal Meaning* (3 vols.; New York: Ktav, 1969 [1899–1901]) 1.268 [in Hebrew]. I translate the relevant remarks: “In accordance with our method, we should ask the following: Why was the story of the wood-gatherer written in the Torah, and why was it adjoined to the spies incident? This question has a single answer, and it is found in this verse (Num 15:34), which says: “it was not clear what should be done to him.” And the explanation is that the Israelites did not know what their status was with respect to the Torah and the commandments, as it was possible that, since they had been rejected by God and condemned to death in the desert, God desired neither them nor their observance of his commandments, in which case they would be exempt from everything. And according to this approach, the incident of the wood-gatherer was written in the Torah to teach that the rejection and excommunication of the desert generation did not exempt them from God’s commandments.” Ehrlich’s insight has been thoroughly neglected by modern commentators; to my knowledge, only Chavel’s (“Law and Narrative” 174–75), among recent treatments of the episode, mentions it, and only briefly, as one among several explanations that have been advanced for the placement of the wood-gatherer story in Numbers 15. The current article thus revives and nuances Ehrlich’s position, and bolsters it with additional literary and historical considerations.

closest analogue.¹³ In Num 15:32, the wood-gatherer is introduced through the people's eyes. The reader does not hear first of the crime and then of its discovery, but only of its discovery: "And the children of Israel were in the wilderness, and they found a man gathering wood on the day of the Sabbath." Indeed, this verse gives the impression that all Israel discovers the wood-gatherer. And if Num 15:33, in specifying "those who found him," corrects this impression, its effect lingers, particularly since the same verse introduces the public again, this time in a judicial role: "And those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and to Aaron and to the entire congregation." The doubt about his fate (Num 15:34: "for it had not been specified what should be done to him") infects them all. In the case of the blasphemer, by contrast, the narrator reports the crime in his own voice: "And the son of an Israelite woman, who was the son of an Egyptian, went out" (Lev 24:10). According to Lev 24:11, he is brought not before the entire congregation, but before Moses alone. In the blasphemer story, moreover, the legal uncertainty is only implicit—it must be inferred from the stated aim of consulting with God (Lev 24:12: "And they placed him under watch, to obtain clarification for themselves by the mouth of the Lord")—whereas in the wood-gatherer story, the people's doubt is made explicit (Num 15:34). While the blasphemer, an outsider by birth, becomes doubly an outsider by virtue of his crime, the wood-gatherer, in breaking the law, crystallizes the uncertainty of the congregation as a whole.

The wood-gatherer's representative role is confirmed by the episode's relationship to the material that immediately precedes it. In Num 15:22–31, God indicates the proper legal response (sacrifice or punishment) to unintentional and intentional sin. Three scenarios are presented: unintentional communal sin (22–26), unintentional individual sin (27–29), and intentional individual sin (30–31). The fourth permutation, intentional communal sin, is strikingly absent. This omission is logical: there can be no *law* for a situation of intentional communal sin; force, not law, governs here. Law cannot contemplate radical disobedience. It can articulate it only, as in this pericope, by framing its absence, by detailing all situations short of it. At the same time, however, the presence of the other three permutations encourages us to understand the text that immediately follows them, the story of the wood-gatherer, as an instantiation of the fourth permutation, so as to fill out a structure of sin that is at once directly parallel (with respect to intent) and chiasmically parallel (with respect to participation):

1. Law	(a) unintentional	(a) communal
2. Law	(a) unintentional	(b) individual
3. Law	(b) intentional	(b) individual
4. Narrative (wood)	(b) intentional	(a) communal

By filling the gap created by the laws that precede it, the story of the wood-gatherer becomes a portrayal of communal sin. Thus, structural analysis buttresses the

¹³ For comparison of the two stories see also Chavel, "Law and Narrative," 171–74.

hypothesized identification of the wood-gatherer and the people: if he sins alone, all Israel nevertheless become his accomplice, for they seriously entertain his view that the law no longer applies. Indeed, the wood-gatherer story, from this perspective, is a doublet of the spies story, which likewise depicts intentional sin at the communal level, and, this time coming before rather than after the law of Num 15:22–31, also provides the fourth permutation in direct and chiasitic parallelism:

1. Narrative (spies):	(a) intentional	(a) communal
2. Law	(b) unintentional	(a) communal
3. Law	(b) unintentional	(b) individual
4. Law	(a) intentional	(b) individual

The missing permutation framed by the body of law in Num 15:22–31 is thus supplied, on either side, by narrative. Narrative here articulates directly what law can only silently gesture at: radical disobedience.¹⁴

The “point” of the wood-gatherer story is that radical disobedience does not legitimate radical disobedience: though the Israelites are now, as a consequence of their revolt, “in the wilderness,” the law remains in force. God’s decision does not generate new legislation, nor indeed, is it properly a legal decision at all. It is rather an act of force, a sovereign act. The wood-gatherer deigns to declare a state of exception, to suspend the law. God refuses to acknowledge his authority to do so. I am not denying that God decides a matter of law in Numbers 15; it is clear that he declares the wood-gatherer’s act illegal, and punishable by stoning. My claim is rather that God’s decision is meant to serve, performatively, as an assertion of sovereignty: God demands continued recognition of his legal authority not in so many words, but by *acting* as a legal authority in the concrete case before him.¹⁵

¹⁴ Law and narrative divide up the said and the unsaid in a different way slightly further on, in Numbers 19. This chapter is devoted entirely to the law of the red heifer, or, “the law when a person dies in a tent” (19:14). Why does this law occur where it does? It is fairly clear that, as redacted by priestly editors, the biblical account through Numbers 19 covers only the first years of the wilderness period, while Num 20:1 fast-forwards to the final year of this period. (For discussions of the chronology of Num 20:1 that ultimately favor the fortieth year of the wilderness period as its setting, see Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990] 164, 464; Levine, *Numbers 1–20* 56–57.) It is possible, then, that Numbers 19 implicitly conveys the passage of time during the intermediate period in the wilderness, a period marked only by the death of the wilderness generation. The law’s subject matter, the purity regulations associated with deaths that occur in that paradigmatic wilderness dwelling, the tent, communicates the tragedy of a generation’s premature demise in the wilderness. The long duration, repetitiveness, and inevitability of this event make it difficult to represent as detailed narrative, but its magnitude precludes a summary account. The law of the red heifer provides an alternative, a non-narrative strategy of indirection. (On the question of whether, on the redacted biblical account, the *entire* wilderness generation died in this period, excepting Moses, Aaron and Miriam, or whether some continued to live until the census in Numbers 26, contrast Milgrom, *Numbers* xiii, and Levine, *Numbers 1–20*, 59–60. My interpretation of the import of Numbers 19 lends support to the latter view, defended by Levine.)

¹⁵ My use of the notions of sovereignty and the state of exception derives from Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (trans. George Schwab; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985). Insofar as the wood-gatherer essentially effects an inverted strike, a refusal

The combined action of God and the people ultimately breaks the parallel between the story of the spies and that of the wood-gatherer. God, by commanding the wood-gatherer's death, and the people, by executing this command, transform the latter incident from a narrative of communal revolt, with which law can have nothing to do, to an ordinary legal narrative, a moment of individual transgression. The wood-gatherer episode, unlike the other three stories that it otherwise resembles, concerns not the origin of a particular law, but the perpetuation of law itself.

■ Historical Analysis

Walter Brueggemann eloquently defends the view that biblical texts are best appreciated through a practice of "double reading" that takes account of both the internal narrative world created by the Bible and the historical contexts in which this narrative world was produced and reproduced.¹⁶ The purpose of this section is to situate the story of the wood-gatherer and the literary unit in which it occurs within the redaction history of the Pentateuch. I will first establish, through source analysis, that the spies story in Numbers 13–14 was likely reworked in the exilic period, and that the wood-gatherer story was introduced into Numbers 15 at roughly the same time. I will then show how this historical context makes sense of the concerns that I have claimed the latter story articulates.

The current and well-established consensus is that the story of the spies in Numbers 13–14 is a composite of an early pre-priestly base (probably J or JE) and later priestly material.¹⁷ The existence of multiple layers is established by such patent internal inconsistencies as whether, among the spies, Caleb alone (as per 14:24) or both Caleb and Joshua (as per 14:30), are spared God's wrath. Of greatest interest here are the two accounts of God's decree, in 14:21–25 and 14:26–35. The second account bears such linguistic markers of the Holiness school (H) as direct address by God to Israel. This does not by itself allow us to designate 14:26–35 as postexilic; on both ideological and linguistic grounds, many of the texts associated with H must be judged to have been composed well before the Babylonian exile.¹⁸

to not work, the dynamic of violence in this story might also profitably be analyzed in terms of Walter Benjamin's account of the conflict between the state and the striking worker in his "Critique of Violence," in *Reflections* (trans. Edmund Jephcott; New York: Schocken, 1978) 281–83.

¹⁶ *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) 75.

¹⁷ For a recent, thorough attempt to separate the compositional layers of Numbers 13–14 and the relationship of this version of the spies story to its parallel in Deuteronomy 1, see Reinhard Achenbach, "Die Erzählung von der gescheiterten Landnahme von Kadesch Barnea (Numeri 13–14) als Schlüsseltext der Redaktionsgeschichte des Pentateuchs," *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 9 (2003) 56–123. For earlier attempts see the literature cited therein. For a more schematic attempt to establish the composition of Numbers as a whole, see Thomas Christian Römer, "Israel's Sojourn in the Wilderness and the Construction of the Book of Numbers," in *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (ed. Robert Rezetko et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 419–45.

¹⁸ On the historical background of H's ideology, see Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 204–24; J. Joosten, *People*

There is, however, a later, exilic stratum of H associated with the editing of the Pentateuch, and there are two strong reasons to assign 14:26–35 to it. First, the fact that H here reworks a non-priestly (JE) text suggests that we are witness in 14:26–35 to the later, editorial activity of H.¹⁹ Second, there are many linguistic parallels to Ezekiel. Thus, for example, the occurrences of נִשָּׂא יָד (14:30) and אֲנִי יְהוָה דְּבַרְתִּי (14:35) are unique in the Pentateuch, but the first phrase is frequently attested in Ezekiel, and the second occurs nowhere in the Bible except in Ezekiel, where it serves as a common refrain.²⁰

What is distinctive about H's account of God's decree—what distinguishes it from the parallel accounts in Num 14:21–25, Num 32:11–12, and Deut 1:35–37—is the centrality of the wilderness. In the other accounts, there is no special emphasis on the wilderness; what is important is simply that the sinning generation will not reach Canaan. In H's account, by contrast, the wilderness serves as a basic structuring device. God lays out the Israelites' fate in chiasmic fashion:

- (a) God will do (אֲעֲשֶׂה) to the current generation as they spoke (דְּבַרְתֶּם), to kill them “in this wilderness” (בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה). (14:28–30)
- (b) The children of this generation will reach Canaan. (14:31)
- (c) This generation's corpses will fall “in this wilderness” (בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה). (14:32)
- (b) The children of this generation will wander for forty years in the wilderness. (14:33–34)
- (a) God has spoken (דְּבַרְתִּי) and will act (אֲעֲשֶׂה), to kill this generation “in this wilderness” (בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה). (14:35)

The phrase בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה connects the opening and closing clauses and links them both to the center of the structure.

This emphasis on the wilderness suggests that the decree arising from the spies incident was reconceived, in the light of the Babylonian exile, as a model for Israel's exilic condition. The late dating for the reworking of Num 14:26–35 is therefore buttressed by the explicit attestation of this phenomenon in other exilic texts, first

and *Land in the Holiness Code: An Exegetical Study of the Ideational Framework of the Law in Leviticus 17–26* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 203–7. The antiquity of the language of the priestly source (both P and H) relative to that of Ezekiel is conclusively established in Avi Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1982). See also Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27* (AB 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 2348–63; Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (JSOT Supp. 358; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 85.

¹⁹ See Knohl, *Sanctuary* 92. For objections to Knohl's notion of a Holiness “school” spanning the pre-exilic and postexilic periods, see Baruch J. Schwartz, *The Holiness Legislation* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999) 31–32 [in Hebrew]. See also Yairah Amit, “Creation and the Calendar of Holiness,” in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg* (ed. Mordechai Cohen et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997) *13–*29, at *28–*29 [in Hebrew].

²⁰ For these and other instances of the language of Ezekiel in this pericope, see Knohl, *Sanctuary* 91–92; Achenbach, “Erzählung” 120–22.

and foremost Psalm 106. After the people, having heard the spies' report, reject the land of Canaan, God responds thus: וַיִּשָּׂא יְדוֹ לָהֶם לְהַפִּיל אוֹתָם בַּמִּדְבָּר וּלְהַפִּיל זֶרְעָם “and he raised his hand (i.e., swore) concerning them, to fell them in the wilderness, and to fell their seed among the nations, and to disperse them among the lands” (Ps 106:26–27). Here, the children of the wilderness generation, condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years, become a typological forerunner of Israel, dispersed among the nations in the Babylonian period.

The verses from Psalm 106 almost precisely echo Ezek 20:23: גַּם אֲנִי נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת יָדִי “I too raised my hand (i.e., swore) concerning them in the wilderness, to scatter them among the nations, and to disperse them among the lands” (20:23).²¹ According to Ezekiel, however, the decree comes not in response to any sin of the generation that left Egypt, but in response to the sins of the next generation. Ezekiel does not indicate what this sin was, and, as elsewhere in Ezekiel 20, it is difficult to correlate the prophet's recapitulation of early Israelite history with the account provided in the Pentateuch.²² In any case, in this verse he clearly links the wilderness period with the future exile. This link is reinforced later in the chapter by the indication that God will gather Israel from the nations to which he had exiled them and judge them בַּמִּדְבָּר הָעַמִּים “in the wilderness of the nations” as he judged their fathers בַּמִּדְבָּר מִצְרַיִם “in the wilderness of Egypt” (Ezek 20:35–36). Ezekiel seems elsewhere to construct the exile on the model of the spies incident specifically: according to Ezek 4:6, the period of sin for the “house of Judah” is forty years, which are symbolized by the forty days during which Ezekiel reclines on his right side, יוֹם לִשְׁנָה יוֹם לִשְׁנָה “a day for a year, a day for a year.” Both the phrase and the time period echo the punishment of the generation of the spies (Num 14:34).

²¹ The parallel to Ezek 20:23 becomes closer if לְהַפִּיל in Ps 106:27a is changed to לְהַפִּיץ. This emendation is supported not only by considerations of sense (לְהַפִּיץ would better describe Israel's situation among the nations, and would offer a better parallel to וְלִזְרוֹת) and by the fact that the error could be attributed to the influence of לְהַפִּיל in 106:26b, but also by the frequent occurrence of the phrase לְהַפִּיץ בְּנוֹיָם וְלִזְרוֹת בְּאַרְצוֹת in Ezekiel. See Ezek 12:15; 20:23; 22:15; 29:12; 30:23, 26; 36:19. In chapters 29 and 30, the refrain describes the exile of Egyptians; otherwise, it refers to Israel's exile. The emendation to לְהַפִּיץ may find further support in the Peshitta, which begins Ps 106:27 with *wnbdr* “and [that] he would scatter.” The relationship between Ezekiel 20 and Psalm 106 is murky, though the fact that the phrases נִשָּׂא יָד and בְּנוֹיָם וְלִזְרוֹת בְּאַרְצוֹת are both extremely common in Ezekiel (with the first particularly prominent in Ezekiel 20) suggests that Ezekiel 20 may have influenced Psalm 106. On the redaction of Psalm 106, see Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, “Ps 106 und die priestliche Überlieferung des Pentateuch,” in *Textarbeit: Studien zu Texten und ihrer Rezeption aus dem Alten Testament und der Umwelt Israels: Festschrift für Peter Weimar zur Vollendung seines 60. Lebensjahres* (ed. Klaus Kiesow and Thomas Meurer; Münster: Ugarit, 2003) 255–66.

²² See Kohn, *A New Heart* 96–104. On the aberrancies of Ezekiel 20 generally see Carol A. Newsom, “Rhyme and Reason: The Historical Résumé in Israelite and Early Jewish Thought,” in *Congress Volume Leiden 2004* (ed. André Lemaire; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 215–33, at 224–25. There is no indication, outside this verse, that the “children's” generation committed a sin meriting exile. The sin of Baal Peor, though singled out by Hosea (9:10), seems on all accounts to have been punished by plague alone.

Like Numbers 13–14 in its final version, Numbers 15 too is a product of H.²³ The direct address from God to Israel in the laws of 15:1–21, and the equivalence of native and stranger therein, establish their provenance in H. The law concerning sacrificial remedies for unintentional and intentional sins in 15:22–31 is a reworking by H of an earlier version of this law, attributable to P, in Leviticus 4.²⁴ The last two sections of the chapter, the wood-gatherer episode and the law of fringes, may likewise be traced, on linguistic grounds, to H.²⁵

The sacrificial law of 15:22–31 likely belongs, with its peculiar narratological properties, to a particularly late stratum of H.²⁶ Likewise, the wood-gatherer story, by virtue of its concern with the Sabbath and its reworking of other H material, may be deemed relatively late.²⁷ The explicit indication of the story's wilderness setting thus suggests, in light of the above analysis of Num 14:26–35, that it was composed, or at least acquired its current canonical form and setting, in the exilic period. We may suppose that the author of the wood-gatherer story used the wilderness tradition and the oracular model to pursue a set of questions that must have pressed upon the exilic community: What is the relationship of the people to God's law in exile? Does the law continue to command obedience, or should Israel's destruction and dispersal rather find expression in neglect of the law? If the former, does it fall to the individual to observe the law, or can the community continue to enforce the law against unwilling individuals?

Other biblical texts suggest that exile obviates the law, or at least, that systematic violation of the law is the exilic norm.²⁸ Deut 4:28 promises that Israel in exile "will

²³ See Knohl, *Sanctuary* 53, 90.

²⁴ See Aryeh Toeg, "A Halachic Midrash in Numbers 15.22–31," *Tarbiz* 43 (1973–74) 1–20 [in Hebrew]; Israel Knohl, "The Sin-offerings Law in the 'Holiness School,'" in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (ed. G. A. Anderson and S. M. Olyan; JSOTSup 12; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 192–203. For Jacob Milgrom's dissenting view and Knohl's response thereto, see Jacob Milgrom, "Two Notes on Numbers 15:22–31 and its Purpose," *Tarbiz* 60 (1991) 429 [in Hebrew], and Israel Knohl, "Response: to J. Milgrom's Comments on I. Knohl's Article (*Tarbiz* LIX)," *Tarbiz* 60 (1991) 431–34 [in Hebrew]. The earlier law of Leviticus 4 discusses only the two permutations (individual and communal) of unintentional sin, so that it does not frame a gap in the way that the reworked version in Num 15:22–31 does.

²⁵ Knohl, *Sanctuary* 18, 186.

²⁶ The speaker in this section is "neither YHWH nor Moses but—*mirabile dictu*—a preacher of the law of YHWH as given to Moses," so that "Num 15:22–31 is a transitional type, charting the move from divine or divinely legitimated exegesis towards independent, *human* exegesis." Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation* 194, 261. Fishbane cautions that this feature does not by itself yield a precise date for the pericope.

²⁷ See Grünwaldt, *Exil* 203–4; Chavel, "Law and Narrative" 164–68, 171–74, 185. Chavel ultimately places the story's redaction not in the exilic but in the Second Temple period. While this chronology is hardly incompatible with the interpretation advanced here—the exile, and the theological problems that it posed, persisted long after Cyrus' decree—it may be noted that few of the dating considerations isolated by Chavel require a postexilic rather than an exilic setting.

²⁸ It is important to distinguish two theological phenomena associated with exile. The first (specific to involuntary exile) is the manifestation of God's wrath. The second is the taking up of residence outside the land of Israel. Given the peculiar character of the "exile" decreed in Num

worship gods there, the work of human hands,” and Jer 16:13 likewise indicates that the exiles “will worship other gods there.” It is difficult to know, in these two cases, whether the worship of foreign gods in exile is supposed to compound Israel’s guilt, or whether foreign worship rather ceases to be sinful in exile (though it serves as a marker of Israel’s shame and thus as a component of its punishment). The latter possibility enjoys considerable support in the case of Ezekiel 20. Here, Israel in exile is ascribed the desire to be “like the nations . . . to worship wood and stone” (20:32). God denies them this wish: “I will bring you out from the peoples and I will gather you from the lands in which you are scattered with a strong hand and an outstretched arm and outpoured fury . . . and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant” (20:34–37). The implication is that, until God so acts, i.e., insofar as they remain among the lands in which they are scattered, Israel stands outside the covenant and may worship idols as it wishes.²⁹ Ezekiel 20:39–40 buttresses this interpretation:

As for you, O house of Israel, thus said Lord YHWH: Each of you go worship his idols, and afterward, if you do not listen to me. . . . And you shall not desecrate my holy name any more with your gifts and your idols. For in my holy mountain, in the high mountain of Israel, declares Lord YHWH, there shall all the house of Israel worship me, all of them, in the land; there I will accept them, and there I will require your contributions and your choice offerings, with all your holy things.³⁰

Idolatry is licensed in the present exile; worship of God is deferred to “afterward,” to when Israel is once again “there,” in the land.³¹ The status of covenantal law in exile is also problematized by the “new covenant” rhetoric of the exilic period, insofar as the notion of a new covenant seems to imply the negation, presumably at the moment of God’s chastisements, of the prior covenant and its attendant obligations.³²

14, namely, that it occurs before the people has even entered the land, the second phenomenon is less relevant for the present study. Note should, however, be taken, of the biblical evidence for the notion that worship of God is chiefly a duty attendant on residence in the land. See Noga Ayali, “The Prayers for ‘Fear of God’ in the Biblical Literature (1 Kgs 8:56–61; Ps 86:1–13; Ps 119; 1 Chr 29:10–19) and the Neo-Babylonian Inscriptions (Nbk. 15; Nbn. 4; Nbn. 5),” *Tarbiz* 74 (2005) 321–69, at 337 [in Hebrew].

²⁹ See the rabbinic interpretation of these verses in *Sifre Numbers* 115 (ed. Horowitz 128).

³⁰ The ellipsis is Ezekiel’s. I have taken the translation from Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* (AB 22; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983) 362. On these verses see also Lyle M. Eslinger, “Ezekiel 20 and the Metaphor of Historical Teleology: Concepts of Biblical History,” *JSOT* 81 (1998) 93–125, at 115–16.

³¹ See also Ezek 4:12, where the prophet indicates that Israel will also stray from the laws of food purity in the exile.

³² The “new covenant” occurs by name in Jer 31:30 alone, but a similar (though not identical) notion may be found in Ezek 16:59–60 and elsewhere. Both Jeremiah (Jer 31:32) and Ezekiel (Ezek 36:26–27) associate the new covenant with God’s assignment of a “new heart” to Israel, and the question of covenantal law in the exile is connected, to a degree, with the question of whether Israel will return from the exile through its own will or through divine intervention. On the latter issue

Some scholars have suggested that parts of Leviticus 26, the concluding section of H, argue against this stance, and insist that the covenant survives the exile.³³ The same view emerges, on the analysis I am advancing, in another product of H, the wood-gatherer narrative. Here, the persistence of the law in exile is articulated through the vehicle of the Sabbath law.³⁴ Because the Sabbath is violated through labor, the crime works synchronically—as I have argued above—to figure a symbolic return to Egypt, the mythological locus of labor, and thus to mark the ironic fulfillment of the people's desire. This symbolic action would have been particularly visible within the ideological framework of H, which emphasizes, first, the Israelites' transformation, through the Exodus, from slaves of Pharaoh to slaves of God; second, the Sabbath as a sign of God's selection of Israel; and third, the prohibition of labor on the Sabbath.³⁵ Violation of the Sabbath could also have represented, at the diachronic level, the destruction of the Temple, insofar as H understood the Sabbath and the Temple, respectively, as chronological and

see, e.g., David Lambert, "Did Israel believe that redemption awaited its repentance?: The case of 'Jubilees' 1," *CBQ* 68 (2006) 631–50; Ayali, "Prayers." On the voiding of the Sinaitic covenant in Jeremiah and especially Ezekiel, see Baruch J. Schwartz, "Ezekiel's Dim View of Israel's Restoration," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Approaches* (ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) 43–67. See also Isa 50:1, in which the prophet cites (albeit disapprovingly) what was presumably a popular view, that the exile could be understood as a kind of bill of divorce or sale.

³³ Thus Thomas M. Raitt (*A Theology of Exile: Judgment/Deliverance in Jeremiah and Ezekiel* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977] 78–80) sees Lev 26:44 as a polemical response to the interpretation of exile in Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah, according to which it marks the rejection of Israel by God and the dissolution of their covenant. Likewise, Daniel I. Block ("Divine Abandonment: Ezekiel's Adaptation of an Ancient Near Eastern Motif," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Approaches*, 15–42, at 17) observes that, while Ezekiel imagines God as abandoning his land and people at the time of the Temple's destruction, Leviticus 26 makes no such assumption. "Lev 26 warns that Yahweh will set his face against, will act with hostility toward, and will send a host of agents of destruction against Israel. . . . But there is no mention of abandoning them. On the contrary, Yahweh affirms that he will not reject (מָאָס) or loathe (נִעַל) them to destroy them." For more on the dating of Leviticus 26 and the complicated question of the fate of the covenant in exile according to the priestly authors and the sixth-century prophets, see Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23–27 2337–46, 2363–65; Baruch A. Levine, "The Epilogue to the Holiness Code: A Priestly Statement on the Destiny of Israel," in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (ed. Jacob Neusner et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 9–34. While Milgrom rejects most of Levine's claims of exilic interpolations in Leviticus 26, he concedes (2365) that 26:44 is to be dated to the exilic period.

³⁴ See Neh 9:14 for the implicit equation of the Sabbath with the entire corpus of Sinaitic law.

³⁵ On the transformation of the Israelites from Pharaoh's slave to God's, see Lev 25:42, 55, and note the occurrence of the root פָּרַךְ in Ex 1:13–14 and Lev 25:43, 46, 53. On the Sabbath and its prohibition of labor as a sign of God's selection of Israel, see Ex 31:13–14, Ezek 20:12, 20. On these themes see further Knohl, *Sanctuary* 14–19, 44, 163, 187; Joosten, *People and Land* 93–101; Amit, "Creation" *13–*29. A particularly important discussion of the role of the Exodus from Egypt within the theology of H may be found in Jan Joosten, "Covenant Theology in the Holiness Code," *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 4 (1998) 145–64. See also Bernard M. Levinson, "The Birth of the Lemma: The Restrictive Interpretation of the Covenant Code's Manumission Law by the Holiness Code (Leviticus 25:44–46)," *JBL* 124 (2005) 617–39.

spatial markers of the relationship between Israel and God.³⁶ By insisting that the Sabbath-breaker be punished, God asserts the continuity of this relationship. True, he has condemned the people to remain outside the land; but to be condemned to the wilderness does not mean to return to Egypt, and the legal bond between the people and God, once formed, will not now dissolve.

■ Conclusion

I have suggested that the story of the wood-gatherer in Numbers 15 is not, ultimately, about a detail of the Sabbath law, but about the persistence of covenantal law even among a people condemned to wander outside the promised land. Ironically, the wood-gatherer's death conveys a message of survival. It signals the continuity of God's relationship with the wilderness generation, and thus also with Israel in the Babylonian exile. The three problems set forth in the introduction achieve, on this interpretation, a unified solution. The wood-gatherer episode occurs in Numbers 15 because it constitutes a reaction to the catastrophic events of Numbers 13–14. The text foregrounds the wilderness setting (15:32) because it is the wilderness decree of Numbers 14 that instigates the crime. Finally, no new law emerges from the incident because the logic of the incident requires that the wood-gatherer violate an already known law. It is impossible to say whether the above exegesis correctly divines the intent of the story's redactors, but the evident textual problems to which my account responds could, in any case, have led its earliest, exilic readers toward an interpretive solution along the lines that I have proposed.

³⁶ See Knohl, *Sanctuary* 196.

Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1–8 on the Logic of God's Χάρις and Its Human Response

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■ Two Problems and Their Solution

In this article I aim to address two questions that might initially appear independent, but are really connected. One is about twentieth century thought, the other is about Paul. Seneca will act as a mediator between the two.

There is first the general, broadly philosophical question of what, if anything, distinguishes gift-giving from lending, at least in the premodern societies often studied by anthropologists, in which gift-giving is a fundamental element of society. As is well known, there is a venerable tradition in twentieth century French thought—from Marcel Mauss via Lévi-Strauss to Bourdieu and Derrida—that has put this question at the center of some fascinating thinking.¹ It is not clear, however, that the underlying problem of whether there is such a thing as a true gift has been solved. Indeed, in the way gift-giving is addressed by the two most recent thinkers of the four, it looks as if a true gift is an impossibility.

Bourdieu and Derrida set up the problem in the following way. On the one hand, a gift is by definition an entirely non-self-interested act; it is gratuitous and completely devoid of egoistic calculation. On the other hand, gift-giving (at least in premodern societies) involves a whole system of expectations and obligations, at the basis of which lies precisely that which was denied by speaking of the gift as a gift: self-interest and egoistic calculation. How can this apparent self-contradiction be removed?

¹ An excellent introduction to the field is *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity* (ed. Alan D. Schrift; New York: Routledge, 1997).

Well, it cannot and that is precisely the point. Thus Derrida, not surprisingly, celebrates the impossibility of the gift.² Bourdieu, at one level, accepts this challenge.³ But then he proceeds to provide an account of the way gift-giving actually works in premodern societies that relocates gift-giving from the level of individual intentions to that of socially inculcated dispositions—Bourdieu's famous *habitus*⁴—and relegates the apparent antinomy to a level of collective repression and self-deception.⁵ At the level of individual intentions, by contrast, the problem of gift-giving cannot be solved. There, for Bourdieu too, a wholly gratuitous gift is impossible.⁶

With regard to the arguments I have just outlined, I will argue that both Derrida and Bourdieu start from a false presupposition, which has its roots in Kant:⁷ the idea that for an act to be truly other-regarding and altruistic—and a gift is necessarily that—it must not involve any self-regarding concern whatsoever. In Kant that idea is famously expressed in the claim that a moral act must be done exclusively from duty and not from inclination. That idea, I think, underlies the modern insistence on the complete gratuitousness of a gift. But both the Kantian idea itself and its modern transference to gift-giving are false. Ancient ethical theory, here instantiated by Seneca, shows that true other-regard (acting for another person for his or her sake) does not necessarily exclude some form of self-regarding concern. And ancient philosophical reflection on gift-giving, as we will see, allows for a strong element of inclination in gift-giving, while at the same time insisting (as do the moderns) that a gift be done for the sake of the receiver and—in contradistinction from a loan—without any thought of being paid back.

² On Derrida's analysis, the "conditions of possibility of the gift . . . designate simultaneously the conditions of the impossibility of the gift"; they even "define or produce the annulment, the annihilation, the destruction of the gift." Jacques Derrida, "The Time of the King," in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity* (ed. Alan D. Schrift; New York: Routledge, 1997) 128.

³ "If one adopts the standpoint of a philosophy of mind, by asking about the intentional meaning of the gift, and . . . wondering whether the gift, conceived as the free decision of an isolated individual, is a real gift, is really a gift . . . then this is indeed sufficient to raise insuperable antinomies (a gift is really a gift only if neither the giver nor the receiver sees it as such) that force one to conclude that a gratuitous gift is impossible." Pierre Bourdieu, "Marginalia—Some Additional Notes on the Gift," in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity* (ed. Alan D. Schrift; New York: Routledge, 1997) 231–41, esp. 233–34. This short presentation summarizes quite well Bourdieu's far more extensive treatment in *Le sens pratique* (Paris: Ed. de Minuit, 1980) 167–231, also basically extracted in Schrift, *The Logic*, 190–230.

⁴ Bourdieu, "Marginalia," 233.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁶ This is the legacy from Marcel Mauss. Compare British social anthropologist Mary Douglas in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 21 January 2005: "On my own version of what Mauss was telling us, no gift is merely the interaction of individuals. We should understand them as part of a total system of exchange." Similarly, the basic idea in Mauss's book was to ask "how we ever acquired the idea that the true nature of a gift is to be free, without any strings" (15).

⁷ Bourdieu himself notes this in relation to Derrida: "Jacques Derrida formulates in new terms the old Kantian question of duty . . ." ("Marginalia," 241 n. 5).

The other question I shall address is that of the meaning and function of Paul's use of the term χάρις, "grace/gift." This issue has been extensively and repeatedly discussed in modern scholarship.⁸ But it has come to the fore more recently in connection with the work of the French anthropologists and philosophers just mentioned. Thus at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in 2003 (Atlanta), it was possible to hear a fine paper by John M. G. Barclay on "Gift and the Circle of *Charis* in Pauline Theology" that explicitly connected gift-giving to the thought of Derrida and Bourdieu.⁹ Moreover, in his equally fine response, Dale B. Martin explicitly raised the fundamental issue of—let us call it—the purity of gift-giving. Whereas Barclay presupposed an entirely gratuitous, non-self-interested, in short, a pure, notion of gift-giving, Martin himself preferred a decidedly less pure one.¹⁰

The same issue underlies the monograph by James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context*.¹¹ Here, to sketch a rich discussion in the shortest possible form, it is suggested that while the inscriptional sources for the actual social and political use of what Harrison calls "the benefaction system" generally just adopt the system without criticism (thus "repressing," in Bourdieu's term, its underlying "darker side" of egoistic calculation), one finds a little bit of critique of the system in some more philosophically minded writers (primarily Philo and Josephus, though Harrison does introduce Seneca in this connection also). It is only with Paul, however, that one reaches the true notion of the gift, which is, of course, the pure one.¹²

Harrison's book has helpfully sifted and collected a huge amount of relevant source material. It is also completely successful, to my mind, in claiming throughout that Paul's highly variegated use of the language of χάρις (gift or benefit) should also constantly be understood in the context of Greek and Roman uses and discussions of the benefaction system. But I am doubtful about the threefold picture drawn by Harrison: sociopolitical acceptance of the system, a little bit of philosophically

⁸ In addition to the most recent treatment by James R. Harrison (see below), substantial recent discussions include F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis, Miss.: Clayton, 1982); D. Zeller, *Charis bei Philon und Paulus* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 142; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990); G. W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift Exchange and Christian Giving* (MSSNTS 92; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and S. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* (WUNT 2/124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

⁹ John M. G. Barclay, "Gift and the Circle of *Charis* in Pauline Theology," 22 (unpublished). I am grateful to Barclay for allowing me to see the paper.

¹⁰ "Response to John Barclay on Derrida, Paul, and the Gift" (unpublished). I am happy to acknowledge here that Martin's response strengthened my own initial skepticism about the purity of gift-giving.

¹¹ James Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* (WUNT 2/172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

¹² *Ibid.*, 114–33 (on Philo); 133–46 (on Josephus); 167–210 (on the Greek and Roman philosophers); 211–344 (on Paul).

minded critique of it, and a revaluation in Paul. Instead, I will argue that in the *De Beneficiis* Seneca spells out the logic of the generally practised benefaction system as reflected in the sociopolitical sources and that Paul may profitably be read as employing the notion of χάρις (and related terms) in accordance with the logic of the system as spelled out by Seneca. The claim is certainly not that Paul had read Seneca, only that he drew on a general system that was then spelled out, as it were, to us by Seneca. With regard to that general system, the claim is that it included both an element of true other-regard and also an element of self-regarding concern. And these two things do not exclude one another.

Here I will focus on those elements in Seneca's extensive discussion in the *De Beneficiis* that directly shape his nonmodern understanding of gift-giving. I will then select a single, central text in Paul: Romans 1–8, and try to show how the overarching set of ideas in this passage falls very neatly into place when seen in the light of Seneca's discussion.

■ De Beneficiis

Seneca's *De Beneficiis* is a masterpiece, one of the great works of the ancient ethical tradition.¹³ I read it not just as an analysis of the sociopolitical benefaction system, whose importance and pervasiveness for ancient social and political life is well known. It is certainly an analysis of that system. It is a brilliant example of a philosopher at work on the actual mechanisms of society. But it is also a piece of philosophy. It attempts to get at the heart of the benefaction system as it actually worked while emphasizing certain elements in it that made it work.¹⁴ In doing so, it addresses an issue that is absolutely central to ancient ethics as a whole: the relationship between self-concern and other-concern. Seneca's work shows better than any other ancient text the crucial role of other-concern in ancient ethics, even as part of an ethics which begins from the question of each person's own

¹³ Curiously, as rightly stated by Brad Inwood, it is also "a somewhat neglected work in the corpus of an often undervalued author"; see his article on "Politics and Paradox in Seneca's *De Beneficiis*," in *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy* (ed. A. Laks and M. Schofield; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 241–65, esp. 244. To my mind, the *De Beneficiis* easily beats another candidate, Cicero's *De Officiis*, as the best Stoic representative in the triad of Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Seneca's *De Beneficiis*. One attempt to rescue the work from its undue neglect should be mentioned: François-Régis Chaumartin, *Le De Beneficiis de Seneque, sa signification philosophique, politique et sociale* (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1985).

¹⁴ Two recent articles on the *De Beneficiis* by well-known Senecan experts show this clearly, each in their own way. Thus Inwood, "Politics and Paradox": throughout the treatise "Seneca begins from an apparently paradoxical and rigorously ethical thesis and concludes with a position which makes a serious contribution to social thought while still maintaining a consistency with the technical Stoic position" (258). And Miriam Griffin, "De Beneficiis and Roman Society," *Journal of Roman Studies* 93 (2003) 92–113; though "more systematic and self-conscious in his thinking than most of his contemporaries, Seneca was not challenging and unmasking the morality that policed the activity of gift exchange in the upper orders," but rather "reinforcing the code at its most demanding level" (113).

happiness.¹⁵ Thus when Seneca analyzes all the many facets that go into the three acts of i) *beneficium dare* (to give a gift or benefit), ii) *beneficium accipere* (to accept a gift or benefit) or *gratiam referre* (to return gratitude for a gift or benefit) and finally iii) *beneficium reddere* (to return a gift or benefit), he is not just talking about the social benefaction system, but about the role of other-concern in a happy life.

There are three fundamental features of gift-giving according to Seneca:¹⁶ The first is that both the act of gift-giving and that of returning gratitude for the gift are acts desirable in themselves, done with no thought of any return, and done only for the advantage of the receiver or giver. These points are argued extensively throughout the treatise, not least in Book IV, which is dedicated to this theme. One argument in particular is worth quoting since it is directly relevant to Paul. It is derived from a long discussion (4.3–8) of the gods’ “countless gifts (*munera*) that, day and night, they unceasingly pour forth” (4.3.2). This leads to the conclusion that “God bestows upon us very many and very great benefits (*beneficia*), with no thought of any return (*sine spe recipiendi*), since he on his side has no need of having anything bestowed, nor are we capable of bestowing anything on him; consequently, a benefit is a thing that is desirable in itself (*per se expetenda res*). It has in view only the advantage of the recipient (*Una spectatur in eo accipientis utilitas*); so, putting aside all interests of our own (*sepositis commodis nostris*), let us aim solely at this” (4.9.1).¹⁷

Could anything be closer to the Kantian idea of the total gratuitousness of the morally right, other-regarding act and by extension the total gratuitousness of the gift? In fact yes, as we shall see. Still, Seneca insists that both the act of gift-giving and that of returning gratitude for the gift are desirable in themselves and not from a motive of self-interest. This feature we must keep in mind.

To get to the second fundamental feature in Seneca’s discussion, we may note his definition of a benefit as “a loan that cannot be repaid (*creditum insolubile*),” or perhaps rather “a quasi-loan (*tamquam creditum*),” since the addition “that cannot be repaid” precisely aims to distinguish it from a true loan, which “either can or ought to be repaid” (4.12.1).

Why can a gift not be repaid? It is here that we get a glimpse of Seneca’s fundamental insight.

¹⁵ This topic was a central theme in my own work on Aristotle’s ethics: *Aristotle’s Theory of Moral Insight* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983). It is also at the heart of Julia Annas’s fine book, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). I have yet to see anyone address and emphasize this particular side of the *De Beneficiis* as strongly as I think it should be.

¹⁶ The following analysis is not controversial in itself. What matters here is seeing Seneca’s analysis in connection with the modern problem from which we began—how to understand gift-giving. This I do by identifying three basic motifs in Seneca’s theory.

¹⁷ I have used the LCL edition and translation of the *De Beneficiis* (*Moral Essays* III; trans. J. W. Basore; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935 and later). I quote from this edition with a few changes and Latin key phrases added.

Seneca has an understanding of gift-giving, gift-accepting, and gift-returning according to which it is the mutual emotional attitude and relationship between giver and receiver that defines the gift element in those acts. By giving, accepting, and returning benefits between one another, giver and receiver establish, support, and give expression to a personal involvement with one another that generates a space of sharing and community within which they may live. In a gift relationship giver and receiver are intentionally directed toward one another as specific people— you and me. The result is a wholly personalized space of sharing and community. This explains why a *beneficium* is a loan “that cannot be repaid.” Repaying implies annulment. If you repay a loan, the loan has been annulled. But if as receiver you return gratitude to the giver for a gift and even return his benefit “with interest,” you do not annul the giver’s beneficent attitude toward yourself. On the contrary, you acknowledge it and even enhance it.

Let us note some quotes in support of this interpretation.¹⁸

1) What matters in gift-giving is the *animus* (mind) of giver and receiver, not the *res* (thing given or received) (1.6.1, 2.18.8, 2.31.1, 2.31.4, 2.32.4, 2.35.1 etc).

2) Even if a receiver cannot actually return the gift, his will to do so is enough (e.g., 4.40.1–2).

3) A receiver who hastens to give back a gift does not have the mind (*animus*) of a person who is grateful; instead he is unwilling to be indebted (e.g., 4.40.4).

4) The feeling of indebtedness presupposes that the gift has been given to me personally, to me *as* me or because I am me (*tamquam mihi*, 6.18.2).

5) The gift relationship is closely similar to that of friendship precisely by being related to me personally (e.g., 6.16.1–5).

6) The “most sacred bond of benefits (*beneficiorum . . . sacratissimum ius*)” is precisely a bond “from which friendship *springs* (*ex quo amicitia oritur*)” (2.18.5).

Hence, the second fundamental feature of Seneca’s conception of gift-giving, the existence of a personal involvement between giver and receiver, which is connected to a friendship relationship,¹⁹ supports Seneca’s first fundamental feature—that

¹⁸ More material may be found in the discussions of *De Beneficiis* given by S. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 40–51, and Peterman, *Paul’s Gift from Philippi*, 52–74. Joubert rightly emphasizes, as I will also, that Seneca’s analysis of gift-giving focuses on the “*interpersonal level*” (41, Joubert’s italics): “*For a service to qualify as a benefit it must have been undertaken because of a specific individual, and not just bestowed on him as one of the crowd*” (51, Joubert’s italics). This aside, Joubert’s discussion of what he calls “this long treatise,” “not his best-known, and certainly not his most outstanding work” (40), suffers from a somewhat disparaging tone toward Seneca (“the idealist,” 42), whom he apparently sees as basically adopting a moralizing position. (Compare Ramsay MacMullen’s talk in 1986 of Seneca’s “high-minded nonsense,” quoted by Griffin, “*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society,” 94.) Peterman’s analysis and the articles by Inwood and Griffin referred to above are far more genuinely appreciative of Seneca’s efforts.

¹⁹ Joubert explicitly rejects the connection with friendship: “neither friendship nor patronage form the interpretative framework within which benefit-exchange is understood by Seneca” (*Paul as Benefactor*, 50). Against this, Peterman rightly speaks of “[b]enefits as the foundation of friendship”

gift-giving and -returning are not done out of self-interest but are desirable in themselves and done for the sake of the receiver and giver. However, the second feature also qualifies the earlier one. Gift-giving and -receiving are not just desirable in themselves in the abstract, but because they are directed to this particular person, with whom one has and wishes to have a personal bond.

This leads us to the third and final fundamental feature of Seneca's conception. Though characterized by the two earlier fundamental features, gift-giving is not at all completely disinterested. For one thing, it is of course in the interest (though a Stoically qualified interest) of the receiver to obtain the *res* that he receives and of the giver to get back his benefit in the form of some corresponding *res*. Moreover, there is quite clearly built into the system an expectation on both sides that this is how the system will work.

For another thing, Seneca at one point (4.18) supports his claim that ingratitude is "a thing to be avoided in itself (*per se fugienda res*)" (4.18.1) by pointing out that the kind of "harmony (*concordia*)" and "unity (*unitas*)" of "the human race on which its very existence depends (*qua vita sustinetur*)" is destroyed if one does not maintain that "an ungrateful mind (*ingratus animus*) is to be avoided . . . because of itself (*per se*, sc. *vitandus*)," instead of out of fear (4.18.1–4). The idea seems to be that all human beings have an interest—even a quite personal, instrumental interest with a view to their own survival—in maintaining the space of sharing and community that will help them survive. Still, that space is constituted by the personal involvement of both people with one another as the individual people that they are and from no immediate self-concern.

■ Seneca and Bourdieu

What we have, then, as the fundamental features of Seneca's account are the three ideas that individual acts of gift-giving, -receiving, and -returning are not done for the purpose of personal self-interest; that they are on the contrary performed within a space of sharing and of community in which people are personally involved with one another for each other's sake; and finally, that these two features do not in the least exclude a self-interest in the system as a whole on the part of each participant.

The last part of this picture may remind one of Bourdieu's account. But there are clear and important differences, which make Seneca's account more attractive than that of Bourdieu. Seneca does not at all conceive of gift-giving exclusively in post-Kantian terms of purity: the idea that nowhere in the system must there be any form of self-concern. Neither does Bourdieu, but he does retain enough Kantian input to think that the fundamental interestedness of the gift-giving system, as he rightly sees it, will render "real," that is pure, gift-giving impossible. Seneca does not draw this conclusion. He is quite prepared to allow for an element of interestedness

(*Paul's Gift from Philippi*, 66). Griffin, too, is far more appreciative of the connection with friendship: For Seneca, as for other ancient philosophers, "acts of beneficence are presented as *creating* a relationship of *amicitia*" (*De Beneficiis* and Roman Society," 97–99, esp. 97, Griffin's italics).

in the system. Still, he also insists on one crucially important disinterested feature, which serves precisely to define the system as one of genuine gift-giving: the emotionally positive concern for the other as a partner in the space of sharing and of community generated by gift-giving. In this way, Seneca manages to keep alive both sides of the matter, in a way that Bourdieu (and Derrida with him) found impossible. He allows for the interestedness (in terms of *res*) of the gift-giving system at the systemic level. But he also insists on the disinterestedness (in the same terms) of the system at the level where it is most immediately operating, in the actual giving, receiving, and returning between two people. Moreover, he develops an understanding of this level, which gives it an independent logical role within the system as a whole. The personal involvement with one another (a different kind of “interestedness”), as Seneca describes it, is not just a sham or an illusion, as it comes out in Bourdieu. On the contrary, it is just as real as the other feature of self-interest that goes into the system, too.

■ Paul—Covenant and χάρις from the Side of God

Part 1: Wrath and Covenant: Romans 1:16–3:20

There is plenty of material in the *De Beneficiis* on the gift-giving relationship between the gods and human beings that is relevant to Paul. Here I can only bring in a fraction.

We already noted Seneca’s view that the gods unceasingly pour forth gifts upon human beings. This leads him to the complementary view of the human response: “No sane man fears the gods; for it is madness to fear what is beneficial (*salutaria*), and no one loves (*amat*) those whom he fears (*timet*)” (4.19.1). The proper human response to the gods’ continuous gift-giving is therefore love. In this text we find a basic contrast between fear of the gods and love for them. This is a contrast that we will also find in Paul. It is relatively indistinct in Seneca, however, mainly because Seneca does not really entertain seriously the idea of fearing the gods. That, he claims, would be insane.

In Seneca’s younger contemporary Plutarch, however, the contrast between the fear of the gods and a range of more positive attitudes toward them is genuinely alive. Moreover, in Plutarch this contrast is connected with another dichotomy that is directly relevant to Paul: God’s wrath and his χάρις. This comes out in a passage in which Plutarch criticizes the Epicureans for “removing from God his χάρις together with his wrath (ὀργή)” (*Mor.* 1101B). In Plutarch’s view one should keep the notion of God’s wrath as it were as a precondition for giving the proper weight to his χάρις. However, like Seneca, Plutarch, too, contrasts human fear (φόβος) in response to God’s wrath (*Mor.* 1100F, 1101B) with the proper response to his χάρις, which in this passage he finds, not in love, but in another range of attitudes that are closely similar to what we shall find in Paul: delight (εὐφροσύνη) and joy

(χαρά, *Mor.* 1100F), or hope (ἐλπίς) and gratitude (χάρις, *Mor.* 1101C), or finally cheerful hope and exultant joy (τὸ εὖελπι καὶ περιχαρές, *Mor.* 1101D).

It seems clear that in both Plutarch and Seneca we are presented with the same system of concepts that revolves around, on the one hand, the idea of God's wrath, which evokes human fear, and, on the other hand, the idea of God's χάρις, which generates a range of alternative reactions in human beings: love in Seneca or those just quoted in Plutarch. Both the context in Seneca and the terminology in Plutarch show that God's χάρις is seen as an alternative to his wrath.

Against this general background of thought, which does emphasize God's χάρις, can we understand Paul's overall picture in Romans 1–8 of the relationship between God and human beings more specifically in the light of Seneca's account of gift-giving? One cannot be sure since other systems of thought might also be in operation. In fact, as we shall see, Paul starts from—and in a way maintains—another specific logical structure: the distinctly Jewish one of the covenant. The question then becomes whether Paul is also drawing on the gift-giving system in chapters 1–8 as a whole. We shall see that not only are there data in the text that are elucidated by the gift-giving model once it is brought in but also elements in Paul's argument that positively require such a model.

In order to show this, I will consider Paul's overall picture in relation to the three fundamental features of gift-giving that we found in Seneca.²⁰ Since Paul's picture is distinctly focused on the relationship between God and human beings, we need to consider separately each of the two parties to the relationship. In accordance with Paul's own basic perspective, we shall begin with God.

The first point to be noted here is that the basic structure of Paul's thought runs from God's wrath (his ὀργή) to God's χάρις.²¹ This is all part of God's underlying justice (δικαιοσύνη). With Rom 1:17 as the title for chapters 1–8 as a whole, 1:18 articulates God's wrath, to which non-Christ-believing Gentiles and Jews alike will be responsible (see 1:20 and 2:1 as part of 2:1–10). 3:21 and 3:24 then articulate God's justice (3:21) in the form of his gratuitous gift (3:24), which will save the believers of Christ from his wrath. The theme of wrath and χάρις is continued to the end of chapters 1–8 when Paul declares (8:31–34) that God is “for us” (ὕπὲρ ἡμῶν), and hence not wrathfully “against us” (καθ’ ἡμῶν), since he has “given over”

²⁰ The aim here is, of course, not to provide anything like a full exegetical account of the line of argument in Romans 1–8. For this see, e.g., my own account in *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000) 196–255, 358–71, or any of the many excellent commentaries that are available. (A particularly clear one on the line of Paul's argument is Brendan Byrne, S.J., *Romans* [Sacra Pagina 6; Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press 1996].) What is new in this article with regard to Romans is mainly the attempt to bring the various individual passages in Romans 1–8 together in a logical grid that corresponds to and reflects the Graeco-Roman gift-giving system as analyzed for us by Seneca. In the two cases where I, to some extent, differ from traditional readings (partly on chapter 4 and on 5:5), I provide a fairly extensive defense.

²¹ Note here already that the theme of the “wrath of God” is “linked . . . to the covenantal relationship of God with Israel” both in the Hebrew Bible and in Paul (thus J. A. Fitzmyer [*Romans* (The Anchor Bible 33; New York, N.Y.: Doubleday 1993) 107]).

(παρέδωκεν) his own son “for us all” and will therefore also “give us (χαρίσεται) everything” (8:32), and that nobody can “condemn us” (8:34) since God “makes us just” (8:33). This fundamental step from wrath to gift—with both expressing God’s justice—is of course well known.²² We should now consider how Paul spells the step out in more detail, still with respect to God, and whether what he says is illuminated by what we have found in Seneca.

Why has God reacted with wrath toward human beings? Paul explains this in detail in Rom 1:18–3:20 for the two main groups that interest him: Jews and “Greeks,” that is, non-Jews. And he summarizes his explanation in a general way in 5:12–21. The basic answer is of course: because of sin (see 3:9, 23 and 5:12). But what he says of non-Jews (1:18–32), of Jews (2:17–3:8), and of both (2:1–11 plus 3:9–20) gives a somewhat more specific content to the notion of “sin.” Does this fit into the conception found in Seneca and if so to what extent?

In Romans 1, Paul argues that human beings (that is, non-Jews) should have grasped (1:20), praised, and given thanks to (1:21) God for his works in the world “since the creation” (1:20). This argument is ultimately of Stoic origin and so might initially be expected to fit into Seneca’s conception.²³ However, in spite of the fact that Paul does speak in 1:21 of “giving thanks” to God (even using the very term for *gratiam referre*: εὐχαρίζεσθαι), what he emphasizes in 1:20 about God’s creation of the world is not so much God’s gift as his “power” (δύναμις) and “divine majesty” (θειότης). Correspondingly, what was missing in human beings is not so much the proper reaction to a gift but giving God “honor” (δοξάζειν, 1:21, 23). This is also why the punishment is—at least initially—stated to consist in human beings being “dis-honored” (ἀτιμάζεσθαι, 1:24). This connection between a failure in the direct relationship with God and a corresponding failure in people’s behavior is an important one. The misbehavior (which is itself God’s punishment for the lack of recognition) betrays the lack of recognition. The same view of what was missing, connected to the idea of misbehavior, is implied in Paul’s remarks about the Jews a little later in the text when he claims that through their transgression of the Mosaic law, Jews “dishonor” God (2:23–24). It seems, then, that the reason for God’s wrath is lack of recognition, not of a divine gift, but of the sheer divinity of God, of God’s divine majesty—a lack of recognition that is then shown in misbehavior. So far then, it would be false to connect what Paul is saying in these three chapters specifically with the gift-giving system as elaborated by Seneca. This is not really surprising, however, for one would expect such a system to become relevant only with the introduction of the notion of God’s gift; and this only comes in later (from 3:21 onwards).

²² See, e.g., Zeller, *Charis bei Philon und Paulus*, 150–51.

²³ It is generally recognized that Paul here is drawing on ideas that are also found in the Wisdom of Solomon 13:1–19 and 14:22–31 (see Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 272). But this account, in its turn, has close affinities with the Stoic argument for the existence of God as developed, for instance, in Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum*, Book II. (For a judicious discussion of the many vexed issues surrounding the concept of “natural theology,” see Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 272–74.)

It should be noted here that in addition to chiding Jews about dishonoring God, Paul also describes their failure in another manner. In 3:2–3, leading up to a recurrent mention of the wrath in 3:5–6, he states that whereas God had acted with πίστις toward Jews, they on their side responded with ἀπιστία. Here πίστις means “fidelity” or “faithfulness” and the corresponding ἀ-πιστία means “unfaithfulness.”²⁴ Since πίστις becomes an important term later when, as I will contend, Paul does bring in the gift-giving system, it is noteworthy that it already plays a role here. The reason is presumably that Paul is here speaking specifically of Jews and, hence, presupposing the system within which the relationship with God was traditionally seen: that of the covenant. After all, he says, using covenantal language, that the Jews were “entrusted (ἐπιστεύθησαν) with God’s oracles” (3:2).

This point has implications, which need to be explicated. Just as we saw that Paul did not think of the initial failure (whether of non-Jews or of Jews) as a failure to respond to a gift of God, so we should now acknowledge that the basic logical structure underlying what he says in these initial chapters of the letter is one that is different from the gift-giving system (though comparable with it): the distinctly Jewish one of a covenant between God and Israel. This idea is already made abundantly clear in 1:16–18 when Paul brings in as a central concept the notion of God’s justice (δικαιοσύνη), which belongs to a different conceptual system from that of gift-giving. What triggers God’s wrath—which is one form of his justice—at the initial stage is human injustice (see 1:18 and 3:5) in the form of a lack of full recognition in both non-Jews and Jews of God’s divinity as shown in their behavior. The overall picture of God’s justice (as underlying his wrath) and human injustice is a covenantal one.²⁵

Afterwards, however, God’s χάρις—as a genuine alternative to his wrath—came into operation with the Christ event as described in 3:21 and following. Is this something that we can conceptualize—still in relation to God himself—in relation to the gift-giving system as we know it from Seneca? Indeed, yes, and this is where the comparison becomes illuminating.

■ Paul—Covenant and χάρις from the Side of God

Part 2: Covenant and χάρις: Rom 3:21–8:39

There are three things to be said here about God’s intervention out of his χάρις. The first is that this act was i) a “free gift,” which was ii) not given to those who received it as something that was their due: i) Human beings were justified “as a free gift (δωρεάν) through his χάρις” (3:24) and precisely in spite of the fact that they had “all sinned” (3:23); ii) and as in the model of Abraham, this act of justification was done “in accordance with χάρις” and not “as payment of a person’s due” (κατὰ

²⁴ See Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 327.

²⁵ For a good summary of the Hebrew Bible understanding of God’s δικαιοσύνη as a covenantal quality of God “manifested in judicial activity”, see Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 105–7, esp. 106.

ὁφείλημα, 4:4). On the contrary, in justifying human beings through the Christ event, God acted for the benefit of human beings—that is, in order to do good to them—in spite of the fact that they did not qualify for it (as in a contract). In this sense, God acted for the sake of human beings (see ὑπέρ in 5:8). There was something good for human beings that God wanted them to obtain: justification and the ensuing salvation (see 5:9–10), which consists of eternal life. They could not get this on their own. Then God gave it to them “as a free gift through his χάρις.”

We know what the content of the gift was at two connected, but distinguishable levels. Concretely, it was the Christ event, but with regard to God’s purpose of this event, it was also its ultimate outcome: justification and life for human beings. Thus, God truly gave human beings a gift in the sense that—as seen from God’s own perspective—God’s concrete act with its ultimate purpose was “desirable in itself.” God just wanted the ultimate purpose to be achieved. This, then, is the first thing to be said about God’s intervention with a free gift out of his χάρις: God’s act was desirable in itself.

This point might be contested by referring to Paul’s description of God’s purpose with his act in 3:25–26, just after his reference in 3:24 to “a free gift through his χάρις.” In particular, more or less directly continuing the use of covenant language in 3:1–8, these verses claim that God wanted to “prove his (own) justice”²⁶ by justifying those who aligned themselves with Jesus’ faithfulness (3:26). Is it then Paul’s idea that in the Christ event God acted on his own behalf only, namely, in order to prove his own justice? Was God not concerned about humans, but only about himself? This cannot be right. God did want human beings to be just, and not merely for his own behalf, but for their sake. That is precisely what is brought in by the notion of God’s free gift and his χάρις, that is, by describing his act in language that squarely belongs to the gift-giving system.²⁷ As Paul describes God in 3:21–26, he acted, in fact, in the Christ event in a manner that corresponds completely to the basic maxim of the gift-giving system with which Seneca concludes the *De Beneficiis*: “It is no proof of a generous mind (*magni animi*) to give a benefit (*beneficium dare*) and lose it; the proof of a generous mind is to lose (a benefit) and still to give” (7.32). Here we see, then, how a basic feature of the gift-giving system is incorporated by Paul into the underlying covenantal system from which he began: it adds to it and extends it. In the Christ event, God acted not only gratuitously vis-à-vis human failure, but also on their behalf or for their sake: to bring them something good that they would otherwise be missing.

²⁶ Πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ.

²⁷ Note how Fitzmyer (*Romans*, 348) in fact recognizes this implication of Paul’s language in 3:24—without at all locating it in the gift-giving “system” that we are considering—when he comments as follows on “by his grace” (3:24): “He [Paul] is not merely thinking of the OT notion of *hesed*, ‘steadfast kindness,’ the gracious root of Israel’s covenantal relationship with God, but rather of the new dispensation stemming wholly from a merciful *benevolence* of God the Father” (my italics).

The second thing to be said about God's intervention with the Christ event—and still as seen from the perspective of God himself—is that it is an expression of God's ἀγάπη (“love”) for human beings. The notion of God's love is brought in at 5:5 and taken up again toward the end of chapter 8. The precise location of this word, just after chapters 1–4, is noteworthy in itself, as we shall see. Now God's love is explicitly stated by Paul (see 5:6–8) to have lain behind God's act in the Christ event itself. But this love also shows itself concretely in a more specific act that follows the Christ event and the justification to which it gave rise: in the gift of the πνεῦμα (“spirit”), through which “God's love has been poured into our hearts” (5:5).

Is God's love as described here not just identical with his wish to act on behalf of human beings themselves, which we saw to be implied in the reference to his free gift and χάρις? Not quite. When Paul describes the Christ event as an act of χάρις, what he wishes to emphasize is God's generosity: that he is “lenient” (3:26), “overlooks” human sin (3:25), and aims at doing good to human beings (on their behalf) in spite of their failures. As we just saw, this emphasis is to be found in Seneca, too. By contrast, when Paul describes the Christ event as ultimately springing from God's love, but also as issuing in God's pouring his love into believers' hearts, he wishes to emphasize God's personal investment in human beings, his emotional attitude toward them.²⁸ This difference fits the fact that Paul only brings in the reference to God's love in chapters 5–8, after he has established the basic story in the language of covenant (namely, justice) and χάρις (compare the transition in 5:1). There is a clear progression here. The background to the Christ event was set up in language that was covenantal rather than of the gift-giving sort. Then the notion of the gift was introduced in order to extend the covenantal language of God's justice, so as to explain the change from wrath to its opposite (the gift). Once it had been shown, by the end of chapter 4, how the original purpose of the covenant had been achieved through that change, the road was open to bring in even more elements from the gift-giving system. That is what happens when Paul begins to speak of God's love. For as we know, Seneca's conception of gift-giving carried with it the idea of a mutual personal investment—what Seneca called the beginning of friendship. Similarly in Paul, God not only acted gratuitously on behalf of human beings. He loves them, that is, has a personal investment in them. This, then, is the second thing to be said about God's intervention with the Christ event when one looks at it from the perspective of God himself.

Third, God's act in the Christ event does not spring only from his χάρις and his love for human beings, it also reflects God's own interests: i) God has an interest in recognition; he demands to be recognized and honored as God. This was very

²⁸ I suspect that this is one place where the reader will feel that in some way or other there must be a difference between gift-giving between human beings, and between God and humans. Though I am in general skeptical about the argument of “onus of proof,” I think it is proper to use it here. The critic must show, for instance, that God's “wrath” is *not* an emotion that is ascribed to God—and similarly for his love.

clearly stated in relation to non-Christ-following non-Jews (1:18–32), but it also applies to non-Christ-following Jews (see 2:23–24). ii) This interest on God's part finds expression in his interest that human beings do his will, whether they know it directly from his law or not. This is most clearly stated in 8:3–4. Not doing God's will is sin (see 5:12–14); God acted in the Christ event in order to remove sin (8:3–4); thus God—also—acted in order to make human beings do his will.

How will God achieve or fulfill these two interests? Precisely through the Christ event. This is another place where the notion of *χάρις* and the Senecan gift-giving structure as a whole reveals its tremendous importance. For it is only because of the precise character of the Christ event as a real gift that God may achieve these two interests. That happens, as we shall see, when human beings respond to the Christ event in the precise ways described by Paul. Then God's two interests will in fact be fulfilled. Human beings will recognize God's immense power as one who can raise the dead into life (as in the Christ event). And they will in fact also fulfill God's will as stated in the law. So far, we cannot quite see why this is so. The point around which everything turns, however, is God's giving the Christ event (with all that this implies) as a true gift and human beings accepting it as just that. It is through God's meeting human beings and human beings meeting God at this focal point of gift-giving that the original covenantal relationship between both parties may eventually reach its destined goal: recognition and the doing of God's will on the side of God; justification and eternal life on that of human beings. Everything hangs on the distinctly gift-giving character—in the full Senecan sense—of God's act and its human response.

To summarize, we may conclude that when we focus on God's perspective, there are particular data in the text that are responsive to the claim that Paul is drawing on the gift-giving system in addition to the underlying covenantal structure. Indeed, some of these data positively require such a claim: i) The idea of describing the Christ event as a gift that trumps God's justified wrath is such a datum. It brings to the surface the idea that in the Christ event, the Pauline God has acted on behalf of human beings or for their sake in spite of the fact that they had previously failed to recognize God sufficiently and to do his will. God gave the Christ event and the ensuing justification "as a free gift out of his *χάρις*." ii) The idea of combining God's act of *χάρις* directly with his personal love for human beings is another such datum since, when seen in the light of the gift-giving model, it brings to the surface a point that does seem to be present in the text: that the relationship between God and human beings is (also) conceived as an emotional one.²⁹ iii) Finally, the idea that God, through the Christ event understood as a gift, will at long last achieve a number of interests of his own is yet another such datum. The point that these interests will be achieved through these means is primarily about the way the gift will function in its recipients. But the fact itself—that it is for this very reason that God decided to give a gift—is a fact about God. It shows that God staged his

²⁹ I shall discuss below whether Paul is actually speaking of a mutual love here.

relationship with human beings precisely in the form of a gift in order to achieve his own aims.

■ Paul—Covenant and χάρις from the Side of Believers

Part 1: Romans 4

Let us now consider in relation to believers how Paul's overall picture might correspond to the three fundamental features of gift-giving that we found in Seneca. As it happens, there are three different, though interlocking, answers to be found in Paul to the question of how God's gift is received by those who receive it the way it should be.

There is first the response of πίστις (see 1:16–17 and 3:22). We know already from 3:2–3 that πίστις may be used as a general term for the proper covenantal relationship between God and human beings. Here the proper translation is "faithfulness." However, in connection with the "good news" (εὐαγγέλιον, see 1:16) of the Christ event, it has the somewhat more specific and pregnant meaning of "belief that God raised him from the dead" (10:9) and "trust in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (4:24). Thus in connection with the Christ event, πίστις (and the corresponding verb: πιστεύειν) appears to have the meaning both of accepting as true what God has done in the Christ event and also of trusting the God who has done precisely this.

Is this first response to God's gift one that belongs specifically within the gift-giving system? To answer this question we must consider some points in Romans 4, where Paul discusses Abraham's πίστις, in particular.

Paul's basic aim with the chapter is to show three things. The first (4:2–8) is one we partly know: that when Abraham reacted with πίστις to God's promise of descendants, with the result that his belief or trust in God was then credited to him as righteousness, he had not done anything that might have earned him righteousness as something that was his due. His sheer πίστις in God's promise sufficed for justification. For the latter was given to him "in accordance with χάρις" (4:4). Similarly, "David" speaks in the Psalms about human beings to whom righteousness has been credited without their having done any appropriate act or even in spite of their having performed inappropriate and sinful acts. (Presumably, though, one should take it that they did have some form of πίστις relationship with God.)

Paul next aims to show (4:9–17) that this πίστις/χάρις relationship between Abraham and God should be understood as prefiguring the situation of Christ-following non-Jews, too, with the consequence that without having adopted any of the traditional Jewish identity markers consisting of certain things to be done (e.g., circumcision and in general following the Mosaic law), but merely through their πίστις relationship with God with regard to the Christ event, they, too, will have Abraham as their father and be counted as just (4:11, 25). The crucial verse here is 4:16, in which Paul explains that the reason why righteousness was credited

in Abraham's case specifically from πίστις was that only in such a way would it be "in accordance with χάρις" and that the purpose of this was that only in such a way would the promise given to Abraham be guaranteed to all his descendants, that is, to non-Jews, too.³⁰ By contrast (as Paul seems to imply), had the promise been dependent on something to be done (e.g., circumcision or other requirements of the Mosaic law), it would *not* have been possible to extend it to non-Jews. This verse is crucial because it brings into the open the ethnic logic that underlies the chapter as a whole.³¹ What happened to Abraham, the forefather of the Jews (4:1), happened in this particular way in order that the same kind of thing might then also happen in the same way to non-Jews, who would thereby become heirs together with Abraham (cf. 4:13–14) to the promise given to him.

Finally, Paul aims to show (4:17–22) that the πίστις on the basis of which God counted Abraham as just had a very special character. It was unwavering and invincible even against all normal expectations. God had promised Abraham an heir. Everything spoke against that happening. But Abraham remained adamant that God would fulfil his promise.³²

In the light of these points, if Abraham's πίστις prefigures that of Christ followers, can we then say that the believers' response of πίστις to God's gift in the Christ event is one that belongs specifically within the gift-giving system? We saw that Paul has constructed the whole story about Abraham in his specific way — with its emphasis on Abraham's πίστις alone and on God's counting him just "in accordance with χάρις" (4:4) — in order to make it fit the situation of Christ-following non-Jews, who also act "in accordance with χάρις" (4:16). Since Paul aims to be speaking precisely of non-Jews, who by definition do not follow the Mosaic law, one might take the phrase "in accordance with χάρις" as used by him here actually to mean ". . . and so not on the basis of works of the Mosaic law." That is, one might take the phrase to have lost its most obvious meaning of "as a gift" with its direct reference to the gift-giving system. That is not the case, however.

To see this, we must be extremely precise in accounting for the logic that underlies Paul's whole argument. Logically, there are three stages in the "story line" that Paul is presupposing: i) God made a promise to Abraham; ii) Abraham believed it; iii) God reckoned this belief/trust as righteousness. Similarly with non-Jews: i) God staged the Christ event; ii) non-Jews believed it; iii) God reckoned this belief/trust as righteousness. Here it is noteworthy that what is said to have occurred "in accordance with χάρις" is specifically the last of the three things: that

³⁰ I read διὰ τοῦτο as pointing forward to ἵνα like in 2 Cor 13:10 (Διὰ τοῦτο . . . ἵνα) and εἰς τὸ in a final sense.

³¹ To speak of an "ethnic" logic in this text hardly needs any defense in the wake of the development of Pauline scholarship since Krister Stendahl and E. P. Sanders.

³² Commentators, of course, note the way Paul spells out the character of Abraham's πίστις, but they rarely reflect on its special character of a complete, even manifestly counterintuitive trust that in its logical form corresponds exactly with God's act of χάρις the other way around and in fact meets it.

the belief/trust is reckoned as righteousness. This is noteworthy since this claim is not exactly the same as what appears to be the basic and most comprehensive claim made in the argument as a whole—to the effect that both Abraham and the Christ-following non-Jews receive justification as a real gift (that is, κατὰ χάριν) and not as something that is their due. Apparently, Paul wishes to say somewhat more specifically that both Abraham and Christ-following non-Jews received justification ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (that is, “concomitantly with their πίστις,” as we might say). What, then, is the role of this πίστις, which evidently cannot have the character of being an “act” (something *done*) through which they might have “earned” justification as their due? And why is Paul so careful to operate with three different stages and to place the stage of πίστις between the two others?

In order to answer these questions we must note two things. The first is that in spite of the fact that the reference to God’s gift is tied to the third of our three stages, the general direction of Paul’s argument suggests that the two initial acts on God’s part (the promise to Abraham and the Christ event, respectively) were also staged as a free gift and in accordance with his χάρις. The whole process begins with a free gift on God’s part (in the case of the Christ event due to the breakdown of the earlier covenantal relationship). The second thing to be noted is then the specific characteristic of Abraham’s πίστις that Paul is so keen on bringing out in 4:17–22—that he had a complete and unwavering trust in God’s promise.

If we bring these two things together, we can see that God’s reckoning Abraham and Christ-followers as just ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (third stage) means this: as *part* of a gift-giving relationship that has been established by God’s own gift-giving initiative (the promise and the Christ event) on the one hand (first stage) and, on the other hand, by the corresponding response on the part of those to whom the gift has been initially offered (second stage). God has done his part in order to establish a gift-giving relationship simply by offering the gift. And those to whom it has been offered have, on their side, done the corresponding part of entering into the gift-giving relationship simply by accepting (second stage) God’s offer (first stage), in the sense of being firmly convinced that it will in fact come about (third stage): that they will receive what God has offered them. With that relationship having been established of gift-giving and the corresponding acceptance of the offer, the human parties to the relationship are counted as just. Or in other words, through the means of the shared establishment of the gift-giving relationship in its full mutuality, the original goal of the covenant has been established. Human beings who enter into the gift-giving relationship and accept God’s free offer are now counted as just.

The fundamental point here is a very simple one that immediately explains why Paul has distinguished between the three stages and why he places such an emphasis on the role of πίστις. The point is that justification (third stage) is given by God—as a free gift and in accordance with his χάρις—as part of a fully established gift-giving relationship. This relationship has been established by God’s free promise and offer (first stage) and by an equally trusting attitude on the part

of human beings (second stage), an acceptance of God's promise and offer that reflects only the fact of God's having made them.

Thus, to go back to our question, the phrase "in accordance with χάρις" is very far from meaning only "... and so not on the basis of works of the Mosaic law." On the contrary, Paul is attempting to show positively that Abraham and Christ followers have been counted as just as *part* of a wholly distinct, new relationship between God and human beings, which is that of the gift-giving relationship. God took the initiative; human beings responded; and it is *within* that relationship that the promise and offer reaches its eventual goal.

We should conclude that underlying Romans 4 there is a very carefully thought out understanding of the meaning of the claim that God has counted human beings as just ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει and as a gift, whether in the case of Abraham or in that of non-Jewish Christ followers. Indeed, the whole point of this understanding is that i) the Christ event itself, ii) people's response to it with πίστις, and iii) God's counting them as just all belong precisely within a gift-giving structure and that it is through this new means that God aimed to recreate the covenantal relationship that had unfortunately been broken: of God's πίστις (or justice) being met by the πίστις (or justice) of human beings (see 3:2–3, 26).

■ Paul—Covenant and χάρις from the Side of Believers

Part 2: Romans 5 and 8

Let us now consider the other two answers to the question of how God's gift is received by those who receive it in the proper way. Do these, too, fit into the gift-giving system as we know it from Seneca?

In addition to the response of πίστις, Paul also operates with a directly emotional reaction to God's gift. Paul calls it ἀγάπη, just as Seneca spoke of reacting with love (*amare*) to the gods' gifts. As we know, the theme of ἀγάπη is introduced in Rom 5:5 and it comes up again in the latter half of Romans 8 (8:28, 8:35 and 8:39). This distribution is not fortuitous. On the contrary, 5:1–11 and 8:14–39 are bound together thematically in a number of ways.³³ We need to consider the thematic connections very carefully in order to form a precise picture of the emotional relationship between God and believers.

Romans 5:5 introduces the theme of ἀγάπη in a manner that is both immediately intelligible and yet also raises some intriguing questions. The overall theme of 5:1–11 is that of the status and position vis-à-vis God of those who have been justified by faith (cf. 5:1). They are in a state of "peace in relation to God" (5:1);

³³ This point, which is very important for the following argument, was brought out wholly convincingly a long time ago by Nils Alstrup Dahl, "Two Notes on Romans 5," *Studia Theologica* 5 (1951) 37–48. Compare also my own discussion of the structure of Romans 5–8 in "Galatians in Romans 5–8 and Paul's Construction of the Identity of Christ Believers," in *Text and Contexts: Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts* (ed. T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm; FS Lars Hartman; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995) 477–505, esp. 479–82, 490–92.

they have obtained “access . . . to the χάρις” in which they now “stand” and “rejoice (καυχᾶσθαι) in the hope for the glory (δόξα) of God” (5:2). The same theme is brought in at the end of the section in 5:10–11, where peace and access are now termed “reconciliation” (καταλλαγῆναι, καταλλαγή) and where Paul repeats the motif of rejoicing (καυχᾶσθαι, 5:11). In between, however, he has taken up the theme of hope (ἐλπίς) from the end of 5:2 and is now (5:3–10) more concerned with hope for the future than with rejoicing about the present.

He begins by drawing a contrast between hope for the future and the superficially negative reality of the present. Not only do believers “rejoice in hope for the glory of God”: they also “rejoice in (their present) trials” (5:3) since they know that trials will generate endurance (ὑπομονή), which will generate a tried character (δοκιμή), which will generate hope—and hope will not put them to shame (5:3–5). The latter claim is then justified: “. . . for the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the holy πνεῦμα that has been given to us” (5:5). Commentators regularly and rightly discuss whether Paul intends to speak of God’s love for human beings, the love of human beings for God, or both.³⁴ Two facts show that “the love of God” is—at least also—to be understood as God’s love for human beings. One is that Paul goes on to justify his claim about the love of God by referring to the Christ event (5:6–7); the other that he repeats this justification (5:8) in terms of a claim about the love of God which unmistakably says that “God shows his own love toward us” in the Christ event.³⁵ Does it also refer to love the other way round? This is where 5:5 becomes intriguing. I will end up answering, “not quite” to this question. But Paul’s formulation in 5:5 also opens up a line of thought that is then taken up in 8:14–39, where his position becomes somewhat different.

Within 5:1–11 itself the reference to “the love of God” has the function of justifying believers’ hope for the future. God’s love lay behind the Christ event, to which believers responded with faith and were therefore justified. So much more may they now feel certain that “having now been justified” through the Christ event they “will be saved . . . (in the future) from the wrath (of God)” (5:9–10). God’s love as shown in the Christ event will also provide the final salvation from his wrath. Thus the basic function of Paul’s reference to God’s love both here in 5:5 and also in the section that concludes chapter 8 (8:31–39) is that of generating certainty in the readers that the object of their hope will in fact be realized: God’s love will ultimately see itself through.

³⁴ E.g., O. Kuss, *Der Römerbrief* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1957) 205–7; H. Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (2nd ed.; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1979) 150–51; U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (EKK VI/1; Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger Verlag/Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) 292–94, 300–5; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 398.

³⁵ All the commentators mentioned come down strongly on this side; e.g. Wilckens, *Der Brief*, 294: “Die vor allem durch Augustin begründete Interpretation von Röm 5,5 im Sinne der durch den Heiligen Geist eingegossenen Liebe zu Gott wird in der gegenwärtigen Exegese nur vereinzelt vertreten. Sie ist zweifellos verfehlt.”

It is interesting to note the way Paul brings this out in 8:31–39. There is first (8:31–34a) an account of what God has already done and will (surely) also do in the future: “He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give (χαρίζεσθαι) us everything?” (8:32). This is then (8:33–34a) rephrased in a manner that takes up the initial point about God’s being “for” believers with the implied consequence that nobody will therefore be able to be “against” them (8:31). Paul now asks who may bring a charge (ἐγκαλεῖν) against those whom God has elected and who may condemn (κατακρίνειν) those whom God has justified. The question about *who* and the fact that he speaks of ἐγκαλεῖν and κατακρίνειν together show that Paul has two things in mind: first, that with God on their side believers need fear no one at all (so overwhelming is God’s power), and second, that with God on their side, believers no longer need to fear *God*. With God’s having elected and justified believers, and with his having given over his own son on behalf of believers, God himself will neither bring a charge against nor condemn them. Instead, in his χάρις he will give them everything (8:32).³⁶

This first part of 8:31–39 has not spoken explicitly of God’s love. Instead, it has drawn on language that belongs back in chapters 1–4 while also (slightly implicitly) celebrating the idea that was mentioned in 5:9 to the effect that justification will mean final salvation from God’s wrath. With the second part of 8:31–39 (8:34b–37), Paul brings in the Christ event as in 8:32, but now with a focus on Christ himself (as against God in 8:32), which leads him to claim that since Christ has died and been raised and is now sitting at the right hand of God interceding on believers’ behalf (8:34), no one (or as it turns out in 8:35b: nothing) can “separate” them from “the love of Christ” (8:35a). The sense of the latter expression is not immediately obvious. Once more, is the genitive subjective, objective, or both? Fortunately, 8:37 suggests a solution. If believers are able to be “victorious over” all the worldly hardships listed in 8:35b “through the one (namely, Christ) who has conceived love for us” (8:37), then the idea must be that the (subjective) love of Christ is sufficiently strong to protect believers by keeping them within its own orbit or power sphere and thus to ensure that in spite of whatever may happen to them, they will receive whatever that love was meant to give them. “The love of Christ” is “Christ’s love” that will see them through.

Finally, the last part of 8:31–39 (8:38–39) repeats exactly the same point, but now by referring explicitly to God’s love, “the one (shown) in Christ Jesus, our Lord” (8:39). Here again Paul says that nothing will be “able to separate” believers from this love. And here again the sense must be that God’s love as shown in the Christ event will see itself through against all the other entities listed in 8:38–39.

Concerning 8:31–39, we should conclude that the divine love that is mentioned here (Christ’s or God’s) serves the same function as in 5:5 of ensuring Paul’s readers

³⁶ Thus Paul repeats here in very short form the fundamental step from God’s wrath (covenant) to his love (gift-giving).

that the ultimate object of their hope will be in fact realized by God. We should also conclude that the idea that nobody and nothing may “separate” believers from Christ’s or God’s love is primarily about that love’s being able to see itself through and reach the goal for human beings that it has set for itself from the beginning. So far, then, in what is said in 5:5 and 8:31–39 about divine love, we have found no clear indication that Paul was also thinking of human love for Christ or God.

This brings us back to the intriguing aspect of 5:5: why does Paul say that God’s love has been “poured into our hearts”? And why does he bring in the *πνεῦμα* at all? As commentators note, the former question should probably be answered in terms of the latter. That is, since one might regularly speak of the *πνεῦμα* as being “poured into the hearts,” and since Paul apparently wanted to say that God’s love had been given to believers not just through the Christ event itself but also in the giving of the *πνεῦμα*, for that reason, he chose this particular way of phrasing his point. But then, why did he want to bring in the *πνεῦμα* at all? As we have seen, his claim about God’s love is supported twice in the immediately subsequent reference to the Christ event. And the *πνεῦμα* has no role to play, neither here nor anywhere else in 5:1–11 as a whole. So why? The answer is not so difficult to find: 5:5 anticipates the whole of 8:14–39.³⁷ With its reference to God’s love and the role of that in overcoming his wrath and ensuring that the object of human hope will be realized, it anticipates 8:31–39 (as we have just seen). With its reference to the *πνεῦμα* as present in the hearts of believers, it anticipates the whole of 8:14–30. Let us now consider the point of this.

I am concerned to show that throughout 8:14–30, where the *πνεῦμα* plays a crucial role, Paul aims to speak of the emotional relationship of believers with God (partly through their relationship with the object of their hope). More specifically, I aim to show that the explicit reference in 8:28 to believers’ loving God is not just an obiter dictum. On the contrary, it brings out from the side of believers the attitude toward God that corresponds to the attitude the other way round that was introduced in 5:5 and will be further spelled out in 8:31–39.

Romans 8:14–30 consists of four sections that are relevant:³⁸ 8:14–17, 8:18+23–25, 8:16–27, and 8:28–30. 8:14–17 brings in a range of concepts that will be important in what follows. First, there is the *πνεῦμα* itself, which is said not to be a *πνεῦμα* of slavery, which would lead believers back to fear (*φόβος*). As will be shortly evident, the *πνεῦμα* plays an important role in 8:23–25 and 8:26–27. Second, there is the idea of sonship (8:14, 15) and being the children of God (8:16, 17). This is particularly closely connected with the *πνεῦμα*. It is when one is being “driven by God’s *pneuma*” that one is a child of God (8:14). And it is by having

³⁷ Byrne (*Romans*, 167) states: “Paul makes a first and rather fleeting allusion here. . . to a key aspect of Christian experience that will later (8:1–30) emerge as a central theme.” I would strengthen the claim, however: he distinctly anticipates the later development.

³⁸ I do not discuss 8:19–22 on the whole of creation, which is closely paralleled by the account of believers in 8:23–25. While 8:19–22 is very important in other respects (e.g., as showing more concretely how Paul imagined the final salvation), it neither speaks of the *πνεῦμα* nor of *ἀγάπη*.

received a *πνεῦμα* that is one of sonship that one cries out (when rising from the baptismal bath) “Abba! Father!” (8:15).³⁹ Moreover, by making believers do that, the *πνεῦμα* itself as it were *tells* them that they are children of God (8:16). The idea of sonship is next taken up in 8:19 and 8:23. It is also taken up in 8:29, along with the idea of being children of God, as Paul states that God has beforehand singled out believers to become conformed to the image of his own son, which will make him the firstborn “among many *brothers*.” Third, there is the point in 8:14–17 that believers will be “heirs of God,” but “*co*-heirs of Christ” (8:17)—a point that again looks forward to 8:29 which is about Christ and his brothers. And fourth, there is the idea that believers will be *co*-heirs with Christ in the precise sense that they will initially suffer with him but will then be glorified with him. Here the idea of suffering foreshadows the whole of 8:18–27, which precisely spells out the present suffering. And the idea of final glory constitutes the concluding point in the account given in 8:28–30, which is about the knowledge that believers nevertheless have that God has known and singled them out beforehand, that he has called them, justified them, and (as it were also beforehand) glorified them. This means that God has, in a way, already done to them what will in fact only be done to them on the Day of Judgment.

In these four ways, 8:14–17 constitutes a precise and powerful introduction to 8:18–30. It is noteworthy, however, that the passage is also clearly intended to bring out what one may call the positive side of the present situation of believers. It is only with the last five words on suffering and ultimate glorification that the passage introduces the account of the present sufferings that extends from 8:18 to 8:27. Before that, what we hear about believers is altogether positive: that being led by God’s *πνεῦμα* they are “God’s sons”; that they have received a *πνεῦμα* that is not one of slavery leading back to fear; that the *πνεῦμα* itself bears witness to them that they are “God’s children”; and finally, that being children of God, they are also his heirs and Christ’s *co*-heirs.

With 8:18, however, Paul begins to give a different picture of believers. Like the whole of creation (8:22), they sigh (8:23) while waiting—patiently (8:25)—for sonship (8:23), just as does creation as a whole (8:19). Three times in this passage, Paul uses the almost technical term of ἀπεκδέχασθαι, which has the sense of “anxiously expecting” or “eagerly awaiting.” The note of longing to get away from the present intermediary state is strong here. In fact, it is hardly wrong to see a progression in Paul’s account of the level of despair (even as part of the state of

³⁹ It is curious that commentators do not regularly see the “Abba cry” as distinctly reflecting the baptismal ceremony. (See Wilckens [*Der Brief*, 138]: “Vielleicht erinnert Paulus von V 15 her (ἐλάβετε) speziell an den Taufgottesdienst.”) Wayne Meeks is far clearer when he says the following in his account of the ritual of baptism: “From his new Lord he [the “novice” or baptized person] received certain gifts: the Spirit, adoption as God’s child, power. He responded with the cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (*The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983] 156). The close connection of Rom 8:14–17 with Gal 4:5–7 and 3:26–27 confirms this understanding.

hope) in sections 8:19–22, 23–25, and 26–27. He begins in 8:18 by stating that he does not consider the present sufferings to be worth anything in comparison with the glory that is about to be revealed. However, his account in 8:19–22 of the sufferings of the whole of creation certainly stresses the longing to be away from the present state. And the same goes for his account in 8:23–25 of believers who are sighing among themselves and eagerly waiting to obtain the status of sonship, which includes getting away from the body as it is now. They are only saved in the mode of hope, and since this hope is for something that is not present, they are eagerly—but also patiently—waiting for its final consummation. Moreover, all of this is in spite of the fact that they have already received the first-fruits of the *πνεῦμα*. Even worse, however, is the fact that they do not know what to pray for. But here they are helped by the *πνεῦμα*, which generates some kind of direct contact with the God who “searches the hearts” and sees what the *πνεῦμα* has in mind when it is present within believers’ hearts and intercedes with God on their behalf.

It seems clear that Paul is trying to bring out very strongly a sense of near-despair and a longing away from the present state and toward the hoped-for future. Still, in spite of finding themselves in this precarious situation, believers are also helped, to some extent, at least, by the fact that they do possess the first-fruits of the *πνεῦμα* and that it even intercedes with God on their behalf. What is Paul’s purpose in describing the present state of believers in this very complicated way? The answer may be found by considering the last bit of text (8:28–30) in relation to what immediately precedes.

Note the motif in 8:26–27 of not knowing and knowing. Believers do not even know (see οὐκ οἶδμεν in 8:26) how to pray. God, however, knows (see οἶδεν in 8:27) what the *πνεῦμα* has in mind. Then comes 8:28: Οἶδμεν δὲ κτλ., that is, “But we do know that. . . .” The contrast here with what precedes is very emphatic. And in fact, 8:28–30 returns completely to the positive note of 8:14–17 by spelling out exactly how it is certainly the case (as 8:17 had it) that believers will “suffer together with (Christ) in order also to be glorified together with (him)” and how it is certainly also the case (as Paul had stated in 8:18) that the present sufferings are worth nothing in comparison with the glory that will soon be revealed to them. What is it then, according to 8:28–30 itself, that believers know? They know that to those who love God (as they themselves do) everything works out for the good of those who are called in accordance with God’s purpose (8:28). These people have been known and singled out beforehand (8:29). And they have been called, justified and glorified—even before the actual event (8:30). Thus, in spite of all the sufferings and vacillations that Paul listed in 8:19–27, believers know—and may take comfort in the knowledge—that since they themselves love God, things have been organized for their good from the very beginning. Their love of God almost *ensures* that things will come out right in the end.

Looking back over 8:14–30, we can thus see that Paul is focusing very strongly on the emotional state of believers, on their understanding of their own situation

and on their attitude toward God and what they hope to receive from him. They are filled with the πνεῦμα and hence i) free of fear and ii) turned as sons toward God as their father. In this way they are also filled with the sense of being God's children. However, in the present state of suffering, they are only more or less desperately longing to receive the full and final sonship. They are sighing for it and only hoping for it. In the end, however, they do know that since they love God, everything will turn out for the good. They have been called beforehand and God has beforehand done everything that will lead them to the final glory.

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα (8:31)? In the last section, which we have already discussed, Paul argues that the knowledge believers have of what will happen to those who love God is in fact wholly justified since it is matched by God's own love the other way round. That love, which is the opposite of God's wrath, will "give us everything as a gift (χαρίσεται)" together with (the gift of) Christ (8:32).

So, does Paul have the idea of a human love of God that is connected with God's love the other way round? Definitely yes. Moreover, in the light of the development we have elucidated from 8:14–17 via 8:18, 23–25 and 26–27 to 8:28–30 (and 8:31–39), we may even say that the human love of God that is explicitly mentioned in 8:28 at the turning-point from near-despair and mere hope to certainty is already de facto brought in with full force in 8:14–17 when Paul explains the effect in believers of their reception of the πνεῦμα. Receiving the πνεῦμα means becoming children of God. But it also means something more: an emotional turning away from fear and toward God, whom one greets as one's father.⁴⁰ 8:28 then explicitly states what must have been implied all along: The emotional content of this positive turn is that of love.⁴¹

In the light of all this, how should we understand 5:5? I think we can now see that the specific phrasing chosen by Paul contains a supernumerary content that is only explicated in 8:14–30. As part of the argument of 5:1–11 it would have been enough to say—as Paul in fact does say in 5:8—that God has shown his love for human beings in the Christ event. But Paul also says something more. He brings in the πνεῦμα, which has no role in the immediate argument. And he brings in the idea that God's love is "poured into our hearts" through the πνεῦμα that has (also) "been given to us." These are supernumerary ideas that are only fully explicated much later. And there they do imply the idea of a human love that responds to God's love.⁴²

⁴⁰ Wilckens (*Der Brief*, 136–37) is quite right when he claims that "Paulus auch in Röm 8,15 mit der δουλεία die Situation sub lege meint und mit πάλιν εἰς φόβον den Rückfall in die Furcht des Sünders vor dem unaufhebbaren Zorngericht Gottes." (See also my remarks above on ἐγκολεῖν and ἀνακρίνειν in 8:33 and 34.) In 8:15 Paul is precisely contrasting the previous emotional state of fear of God (cf. both Plutarch and Seneca) with the present experience of "sonship," which is one of love.

⁴¹ Schlier (*Der Römerbrief*, 271 on 8:28, my italics) at least has this fine sentence: "Die 'Heiligen', die Gott lieben, lieben ihn in der Antwort auf Gottes ewigen Ruf der Liebe in Jesus Christus."

⁴² I thus end up finding Fitzmyer's comment on 5:5 too one-sided (*Romans*, 398): "It is not 'our

Similarly, how should we in the end understand the two references in 8:35 and 39 to the idea that nothing is able to “separate us from” Christ’s or God’s love? Once more, the immediate sense is the subjective one I have given. But now, with so much in 8:14–30 concerned with the emotional directedness of believers toward God, can anybody be certain that the very peculiar idea of “non-separation” does not also contain the note of human beings *feeling* inseparable or non-separated from the divine love—namely, by responding to it in kind?⁴³

Enough has been said to conclude that the important theme in Romans 5 and 8 of God’s love has, as its counterpart, an equally important theme of the love with which human beings meet and respond to that divine love. What we have here, according to Paul, is precisely a mutual, interlocking state of love, one that corresponds to the mutual gift-giving relationship that we saw him develop in chapter 4. This idea intimately fits the gift-giving system as we know it from Seneca. Paul only begins to speak of this mutual love in Romans 5 and 8 after the basic gift-giving system has been established, with God’s χάρις being responded to by Christ followers’ πίστις, all of which results in believers’ being declared just (see 5:1). By contrast, the love relationship—though hardly God’s own love—is established at a later stage when believers are baptized and have received the πνεῦμα. Similarly, as we saw, in Seneca the gift-giving relationship was itself only the beginning of friendship (with all the connotations of Stoic “friendship,” which certainly includes an element of “love”).⁴⁴

love of God,’ as many older commentators, following Augustine (*De Spiritu et littera* 32.56. . .), understood it, but ‘God’s love for us’ (subjective gen.), as the following phrase makes clear, and as most modern commentators have interpreted it (Cornely, Dunn, Käsemann, Kuss, Lagrange, Nygren, Prat, Schlier, Sickenberger, Zeller).” Rather, 5:5 anticipates 8:14–30/39, where Paul is in fact *also* talking of “our love of God.” When Fitzmyer also writes on 5:5 that “[t]he human ‘heart’ is singled out *as the seat of human love*; it is seen as the receptacle for the reception of the poured-out love of God” (my italics), it seems to me that the two halves of this statement cry out to be combined.

⁴³ I cannot find any serious discussion of this twice repeated idea of not “separating.” Commentators regularly take it in the “objective” sense that against any possible intervention from the outside, Christ’s and God’s love will be able to keep believers within the sphere of operation of that love. Nobody seems to consider the possibility of an additional, “subjective” sense of the claim that nobody or nothing will be able to “separate *us*” from that love. But is it not noteworthy that Paul in both cases emphasizes the “us” by placing it before “separate”?

⁴⁴ For a few texts in Seneca that contain the idea of love, see, e.g., *Ben.* 2.18.3, 3.19.4 (*caritas*), 4.5.1 (*amari*), 4.21.2, 6.42.1 (*verus amor*). In the light of Paul’s dual version of the human response to God’s χάρις as one of both πίστις and ἀγάπη, one might ask whether there is a similar duality in Seneca. The second response is evident throughout in Seneca, but what about the first one? In particular, does Seneca speak of *fides* on the part of the receiver? In fact yes, though not with the regularity with which Paul (for reasons of his own) speaks of πίστις. For instance, at the very beginning of the work Seneca asks whether it is more shameful to repudiate a benefit (on the part of the potential receiver) or to ask for its repayment (on the part of the giver). The latter is wrong since we have a right to receive back only what is voluntarily returned. But the former is wrong too, for instance if somebody repudiates a benefit by declaring that he will not be able to pay it back, for “in order to discharge the trust placed in one (*ad liberandam fidem*) what is needed is not resources (*facultates*) but the mind (*animus*); for if a benefit is acknowledged, it is returned (*reddit*

The third response to God's gift on the part of the Pauline Christ followers corresponds to the one we noted in Plutarch: cheerful hope and exultant joy (τὸ εὐέλπι καὶ περιχαρές). This is the theme of hope (ἐλπίς), and indeed hope for glory and salvation, which we have already come across and which Paul celebrates in 8:17–30. It is important to see that this theme is looking toward the future and that it is about concretely obtaining something (more) from God: post-mortem glory, in fact what Paul has earlier (6:22–23) described as “eternal life,” as contrasted (6:21) with “death.” This idea takes up the description Paul has given already in chapter 2 (2:6–10) of the reward or punishment that God will give to human beings “on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgement will be revealed” (2:5): “eternal life” (2:7) with “glory and honor and peace” to “everyone who does good” (2:10), and “anguish and distress” to “everyone who does evil” (2:9). Seen in the light of Seneca's analysis of gift-giving, this third theme of hope clearly belongs with the *res*, the things to be obtained through gift-giving, not with the *animus*, the mental attitude of the recipient vis-à-vis the giver. The latter idea falls under the two previous themes of post-baptismal ἀγάπη and the initial response of πίστις. Still, it is noteworthy that under the general rubric of how God's gift is received by those who receive it in the proper way, Paul identifies three different reactions that all fit into the picture we derived from Seneca. What is more, it should surely make one pause to realize that these three reactions are in fact identical with the famous Pauline triad of faith, hope and love.⁴⁵

■ Romans 1–8: Two Corollaries and a Retrospect

Before concluding on Romans 1–8, we should note two corollaries of our reading of the role played by the gift-giving system as part of Paul's argument. One concerns the theme of fulfilling God's will. The other is about the wider rhetorical function of Paul's gift-giving interpretation of the Christ event itself.

... *beneficium, qui debet*)” (1.1.3). Here “acknowledging” a benefit (Basore's correct rendering of *debere*), as it were by *fides* (trustworthiness) on the receiver's part, is said to be sufficient to discharge or fulfill (*liberare*) the trust (*fides*) placed in the receiver by the giver. Thus *fides* in Seneca seems to combine the giver's trust in the receiver and the trustworthiness on the part of the receiver with which he meets the giver's trust. May we find here an idea that explains Paul's enigmatic ἐκ πίστεως [God's] εἰς πίστιν [believers'] in δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ [sc. τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ] ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν in Rom 1:17? After all, Paul's God too has πίστις in human beings even where they meet it with ἀ-πιστία (Rom 3:3).

⁴⁵ In the light of my identification of the three basic motifs in Seneca and the logic of their appearance in Romans 1–8 (see 5:2 and 5:5, not least the ὅτι of the latter verse), it would be preferable to speak of the triad as one of faith, love and hope. It is noteworthy, however, that Romans 1–8 end in a way (8:38–39) that emphasizes the theme of God's love for believers. If one may then also take the idea that “nothing will be able to separate us from God's love” as implying the notion of a mutual love, then the traditional form of the triad, which of course goes back in Paul to 1 Thess 1:3 and 5:8, may be seen as raising its head here, too. This, however, is also in perfect agreement with the Senecan logic since in Seneca, too, the theme of mutual emotional involvement receives so much emphasis.

We saw that God had an interest in seeing the fulfillment of his will; and I suggested—without being able to spell it out then—that God’s use of gift-giving might precisely serve that interest. We can now see how. The reason is that the two first responses of Christ followers to God’s act of gift-giving have precisely the effect of making believers wish to fulfill God’s will. The response of πίστις itself has this character since it consists in an unwavering directedness toward God. And the response of ἀγάπη has this character, too, and to an even larger extent. With human beings meeting God’s love with a love of their own in a mutual, interlocking pattern, there is nothing they may wish to do other than fulfilling God’s will. Everything is ready, therefore, to make them return God’s gift (compare the idea in Seneca of *beneficium reddere*) by actually fulfilling his will. In this way, by God’s use of the gift-giving system, the original purpose of the covenant is achieved.

The other corollary concerns the way Paul’s reasoning on gift-giving fits in with what is his most comprehensive aim in Romans 1–8 as a whole: to show that the proper response for Jews and non-Jews alike to God’s beneficial act of sending Christ is in fact one of faith and love—and hence returning the benefit. What Paul is saying is that God has performed an overwhelming act of χάρις. Nobody acts rightly, then, if he does not respond to that act in kind, which means: in the way in which a beneficial act done to you requires your proper response of πίστις, of returning ἀγάπη for the ἀγάπη shown by God, of gratitude (or thanks, εὐχαριστία, as Paul has it elsewhere⁴⁶), and of returning the benefit by doing God’s will. Any other response will amount to annulling God’s gift.⁴⁷ By relying on the semantic field of gift-giving as elucidated to us by Seneca, Paul becomes able to “remind” (see 15:15) his addressees that they must respond appropriately to God’s gift by receiving it with the direct (πίστις) and emotional (ἀγάπη) involvement with God that also constitutes gratitude (in Seneca: *gratiam referre*). That is also the attitude that must be found in his addressees if they are to solve the remaining issues that he goes on to address. In all this Paul is relying on the special character of the gift-giving system that he has chosen as the grid through which to see the Christ event and to fit it into the underlying scheme of covenant and justice.

This leads to a few retrospective remarks on the proposed reading of Romans 1–8.

First, I have argued that Paul in Romans 1–8 is drawing distinctly on the ancient Graeco-Roman gift-giving system as spelled out to us, for instance, by Seneca. But would it not be sufficient to see him as operating within a more or less traditional form of Jewish covenantal thinking? For instance, while the notion of God’s wrath is certainly a traditional element of covenantal thinking, so is that of God’s “steadfast

⁴⁶ For the direct relationship between χάρις (or χάρισμα) and εὐχαριστία, see, e.g., 2 Cor 1:11.

⁴⁷ Compare Gal 2:21: “I do *not* annul (ἀθετεῖν) God’s gift (χάρις); conversely, if justification is acquired through the (Mosaic) law, then Christ died gratuitously (δωρεάν in the bad sense: for no purpose).” Incidentally, one may speculate whether in using δωρεάν in this sense (namely, as a gift which was *empty*) Paul is not precisely playing on the gift-giving character of God’s act, compare Rom 3:24 where δωρεάν is again used together with χάρις, but now in its positive sense.

mercy” (his *hesed* חֶסֶד).⁴⁸ Correspondingly, the notion of πίστις on the human side, to which I have given a specifically gift-giving interpretation (as it is spelled out in Romans 4), was not a “post-covenantal,” Pauline invention, but rather an intrinsic part of covenantal thinking itself. Indeed, is it at all convincing to see Paul as operating with two distinct systems of thought (of covenant and of gift-giving) within the same very few verses, e.g. Rom 3:23–26, as I have suggested?

I shall not repeat here the arguments already given for viewing the gift-giving system to be at work in the Pauline texts. Still, the emphasis on the “free gift” of God (3:24) is striking. (See also 5:15 and 17 as part of a passage, 5:15–21, which as a whole almost overemphasizes the “free” character of God’s χάρις.) The contrast between God’s act in accordance with χάρις and God’s paying people their true due (4:4) exactly corresponds to Seneca’s contrast between gift-giving and lending. And the special character of Abraham’s response of πίστις presupposes the former particular kind of act on God’s side.

If all of this is accepted, then I have no objection to saying, as I have already done, that Paul, throughout, is working within a covenantal system of thought, which he also extends by drawing on the gift-giving system that we know from elsewhere. He may well be relying on the more traditional notion of God’s “steadfast mercy” (but then again extending it in the gift-giving direction). And he is surely relying on the traditional notion of πίστις (both divine and human) in his account of the special form that it has taken in Abraham and Christ followers. The point will stand that we need to bring in the gift-giving system, too, in order to capture everything he says.

Nor is this really very strange. After all, Paul is arguing in Romans 4, as we have seen, for an understanding of the Abraham story that would immediately extend the divine-human relationship to a similar relationship between God and people who were not Jews. But then a system of thought that had been most distinctly elaborated outside a Jewish context but which could nevertheless be seen as a clear and strong extension of traditional Jewish covenantal thinking would be a perfect fit. Here, it seems, Paul found an ideal set of ideas with which to develop traditional Jewish covenantal thinking in a direction that would precisely explain why the traditional role of the Mosaic law within that thinking should be rejected.

The second retrospective remark is that the interpretation I have given of the underlying logic of Romans 1–8 is quite close to a traditional Christian interpretation: that of God’s completely free gift as expressing his χάρις and that of the corresponding, completely unwavering human response of πίστις, which in itself suffices for justification. Where the proposed interpretation differs is—once more—in an extension of that particular idea to cover also these two themes: of God’s love for human beings being met by their love for God in a mutual, interlocking pattern, and of God’s personal interests (in recognition and having his will be done) in and behind the whole process being met by human beings also

⁴⁸ See, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 108.

having a personal interest (in salvation and eternal life) in participating in it. All three elements go into Paul's overall picture, which nevertheless stresses the first feature of the free gift and human πίστις.

It seems a strength of the proposed interpretation that it is able to integrate both a "traditional Jewish," covenantal reading of the logic of Paul's argument and a "traditional Christian," grace-oriented one while at the same time giving the whole picture a more comprehensive and very precise point. If this result has been achieved by analyzing Paul's argument in the light of the logic of the gift-giving system as spelled out to us by Seneca, then this only shows once more that Paul must truly be read "beyond the Judaism/Hellenism divide."⁴⁹

■ Conclusion

I have argued that Seneca's analysis of gift-giving helps to dissolve the modern problem about gift-giving raised by both Derrida and Bourdieu. This is a good example of the way in which a return to ancient Greek and Roman ethics behind the Christian tradition and its modern offshoots (from Kant onwards) may help us to see a one-sidedness in the later tradition.⁵⁰ I have also argued that Paul himself belongs with Seneca and before the later tradition. As we have seen, Paul should not be interpreted as entertaining a puristic understanding of God's gift even though, like Seneca, he, on one level, emphasizes the completely other-regarding character of God's act.

This result also throws serious doubts on much of the modern scholarly analysis of the ancient material on χάρις. For instance, James Harrison's picture, which I sketched very briefly to begin with, appears to me highly doubtful. It is not that we find the beginning of a critique of the gift-giving system in the Roman philosopher Seneca, a critique that is then taken one step further in the Jewish philosopher and theologian Philo, and is only brought to full bloom in the Christian theologian Paul. Rather, Seneca is articulating with philosophical precision an understanding of the gift-giving system that was part and parcel of the ancient system itself as socially practised throughout the Hellenistic world. And Paul is relying on the same understanding in articulating what God has done to human beings in the Christ event.

The villain in all this is the modern, puristic conception of gift-giving. I hope to have shown that this is not there in the ancient sources. Instead, there is one element

⁴⁹ The same point could be argued, I believe, for other passages in the New Testament that make a pointed use of the term χάρις. See, for instance, Luke's Jesus in the Sermon on the Plain (esp. 6:32–35) in comparison with the parallel passage spoken by Matthew's Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (esp. 5:46–48), where χάρις is not mentioned.

⁵⁰ This was a constant concern of the British philosopher Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1985); *Shame and Necessity* (Sather Classical Lecture 57; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). In Williams's case, however, the step went back even before Socrates.

in those sources that is sufficient to make gift-giving different from any other kind of person-to-person relationship and indeed sufficient to save its life-giving character: the element of personal involvement with the other as the person he or she is, the element that, as Seneca has it, makes gift-giving an act “from which friendship springs.”⁵¹ This element is developed and emphasized by Seneca and Paul alike. They saw better, I believe, on this topic than their successors.⁵²

⁵¹ I celebrate this element here since it is likely to be forgotten by people who are—in itself quite rightly—animated by a hermeneutics of suspicion like the one that underlies Bourdieu’s analysis of gift-giving. To give another, but closely similar example, the reintroduction (from Ernst Troeltsch) by Gerd Theissen in the 1970’s of the notion of “love patriarchy” (*Liebespatriarchalismus*) greatly helped to lay bare the power mechanisms involved in Paul’s handling of the theme of ἀγάπη. (See Theissen, “Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde,” in *Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristentums* [2d ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983] 231–71, esp. 268–71.) But this operation should not of course be understood to turn all the talk of ἀγάπη in Paul’s letters into a sham. Paul was concerned with establishing and maintaining a space of sharing and community within his congregations.

⁵² This is a thoroughly reworked version of a paper I gave at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in November 2004 (San Antonio) in the Hellenistic Moral Philosophy and the New Testament Group. A later version was given in February 2005 to the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences (Copenhagen), and in Spring 2006 at New Testament seminars in Durham, U. K. (March 2006) and Aberdeen (May 2006). I am grateful for comments from participants on all those occasions as well as for excellent written comments by two readers for *HTR*.

The Beauty of the Redemption of the World: The Theological Aesthetics of Maximus the Confessor and Jonathan Edwards

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■ Introduction

Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, in his *Herrlichkeit*, laments the eclipse of the aesthetic in modern theology, noting that the *being* of a Christian is itself a thing of beauty inscribed by the grace of God; that is, it is a form of existence “opened up to us by the God-Man’s act of redemption. . . . God’s incarnation perfects the whole ontology and aesthetics of created being.”¹ Von Balthasar traces the loss of the aesthetic dimension from Protestant theology to the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, which seeks to abstract “data” of scriptural revelation into objective formulae. This approach leads to the historicism of Hegel, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and Barth, effectively removing the meditative gaze from theological contemplation.² Von Balthasar’s ultimate argument is that it is necessary for Protestant theology to revive the Alexandrian tradition in order to recover the “transcendent principle of beauty as derived from and most proper to God,” which is to be “for us the very apex and archetype of beauty in the world.”³

Von Balthasar’s thesis is compelling, insofar as the aesthetic dimension has indeed “disappeared,” for the most part, from Protestant dogmatics. Yet,

* The title of this paper is an adaptation of the statement: “beauty will be the redemption of the world,” from Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel *The Idiot* (trans. Alan Myers; *Oxford Classics of World Literature*; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 402.

¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit. Eine theologische Ästhetik Schau der Gestalt* (vol. 1: *Schau der Gestalt*; Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1961) 21–22.

² *Ibid.*, 45–57. Balthasar argues, effectively, that a similar occurrence has taken place in Catholic theology, which has succumbed to a scientism stemming from the Enlightenment.

³ *Ibid.*, 45, 69.

an important element is missing from his evaluation. At the threshold of the Enlightenment, the American Protestant theologian Jonathan Edwards effected a revival of theological aesthetics—the beauty of God, creation, and redemption—through an appropriation of the philosophical revival of Platonic metaphysics in conjunction with a reinterpretation of classical Reformed theology.⁴ The striking theological vision Edwards produced is, in effect, the fulfillment of von Balthasar's imperative to the Protestant tradition. The unique synthesis forged by Edwards bears a fascinating resemblance to the aesthetic theological system of the seventh century Orthodox theologian Maximus the Confessor. While certain features, such as ecclesiology and sacraments, cannot be reconciled to each other and should not be flattened out (as these remain the unique “marks” of their respective traditions), the overarching framework of their theological systems aligns at certain points, particularly in their articulation of the aesthetic dimension of the doctrines of God, being, creation, and redemption.

This paper is an attempt to address Balthasar's problematic by examining the congruencies between Edwards and Maximus in their discussions of certain theological loci from an aesthetic perspective.⁵ The line of argument that will

⁴ Douglas Elwood delivers an able account of Edwards's move “to neoplatonize Calvinism;” see Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) 91–110. Norman Fiering's groundbreaking monograph details much more fully the likely sources of Platonic influence on Edwards's philosophical thinking; see Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards' Moral Thought and its British Context* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1981) esp. chs. 2–4. Janice Knight provides a highly insightful and significant reading of the thinking of Edwards's New England forerunners and the impact of the theological and philosophical thought emanating from Cambridge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; see Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

⁵ The argument of this paper will not be that Edwards is an “interpreter” of Maximus, in the sense of deliberately reviving Maximus or Eastern patristic thought (as the historical evidence does not quite bear this out; see below), but that Edwards's unique combination of Lockean-Berklean epistemology and Cambridge Platonism with Reformed theology resulted in a philosophical-theological vision that echoes Maximus. An examination of the books read by Edwards and the catalogue of titles available at Yale during the years of Edwards's education yields no verifiable evidence of Edwards's familiarity with Maximus the Confessor; see Thomas H. Johnson, “Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading,” *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 28 (1930–33) 193–222. The bibliographic work of Irena Backus in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West* (New York: Brill, 2001) indicates that Latin and Greek editions of the works of Maximus and other Eastern patristics (including the Cappadocians) were available in Europe from the turn of the eleventh century onward through numerous reprintings; it is possible that these were read by British and Continental Reformed theologians who studied at European institutions, and certain ideas may have been transmitted through their works. It is certain that members of the Cambridge Platonist movement had direct knowledge of and facility with this tradition. The most likely, though still speculative, source of Edwards's familiarity with Eastern patristics, and in particular Maximus, aside from the Platonists, would be his reading of Peter van Mastricht and Thomas Aquinas, who were quite familiar with Maximus (and Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite); this is the contention of Amy Plantinga Pauw in her study of Edwards's trinitarian theology, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002).

shape this examination is that from their respective historical standpoints both Edwards and Maximus synthetically appropriated neoplatonic categories into a constructive framework of “conciliar” theology—that is, theology within the tradition of the ecumenical councils (in a parallel manner, both figures nuanced the theological traditions in which they worked)—resulting in a richly aesthetic theological vision of God and the world.⁶ The primary focus of the paper will be upon Edwards’s reconceptualization of the ontological being of God and human redemption in relation to one another, under the auspices of the categories of beauty and harmony—structures that form the basis of God’s relationship to the created world through the “repetition” of God’s being. As I trace these themes through the writings of Edwards (special attention will be given to the “Two Dissertations,” “Discourse on the Trinity,” “Justification by Faith Alone,” and “The Miscellanies”), I will compare them to relevant aspects of Maximus the Confessor’s cosmological doctrine of God and redemption as found especially in “Centuries on Love” and the “Ambigua” (I will offer a brief overview of Maximus’s historical and theological setting in the first section in order to establish his aesthetic framework). In the conclusion, I will briefly discuss the historical events and forces that led to the formation of the theological visions of Maximus and Edwards; though centuries apart, these events and forces created similar theological milieus. At the heart of the constructive visions of the two theologians is a consonant view of God and the glory and beauty of redemption.

The implication of this analysis is that at the beginning and end of all things, for Edwards and Maximus, is the unmitigated participation in and enjoyment of the beauteous being of God in glory, in which God gathers redeemed creation into *ceaseless and ever-increasing union* with the triune community.⁷

⁶ In addition to the sources noted by Pauw, Knight notes the infusion of Platonist thought in the English Puritan theologians Richard Sibbes, John Cotton, John Owen, and Thomas Goodwin, who were quite significant primary theological sources for Edwards. The most convincing explanation is that Edwards drew from a wide range of sources in scholastic Catholic and Reformed literature as well as the Cambridge theology and philosophy, which itself drew from the ancient Christian and “Greek” texts; see Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts*, 1–33, 109–63, 198–213. Fiering zeroes in on the philosophical angle, providing helpful detail on the intellectual background and context of “New England theology” prior to and contemporary with Edwards; see Fiering, *Edwards’ Moral Thought*, 3–47. Brief but lucid commentary can also be found in Michael J. McClymond, “Salvation as Divinization: Jonathan Edwards, Gregory Palamas, and the Theological Uses of Neoplatonism,” in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian* (ed. Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp; Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2003) 142–44.

⁷ Edwards, “Miscellanies No. 772,” in *Works of Jonathan Edwards* [henceforth *Works*], vol. 18: *Miscellanies 501–832* (ed. Ava Chamberlain; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 422. Likewise, see Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum* 7, in *Patrologia Graeca* [henceforth *PG*] (ed. J–P Migne; Paris, 1888) 91:1072A.

■ The Aesthetics of God in Maximus the Confessor

*Brief Background to Maximus*⁸

Maximus the Confessor (580–662) lived in an era marked by rupture—the dissolution of the Roman Empire, the division of the Orthodox-Catholic church between the imperial fronts, the fracturing of the tradition in the wake of Chalcedon, the ruling of the Henotikon, not to mention the rise of Islam on the Eastern border. In fact, Maximus’s own life bears the marks of rupture on account of his intricate involvement in the doctrinal controversies and disputes of the era (which themselves had inimical ecclesial and secular political implications), resulting in three periods of exile and eventual martyrdom.⁹ Maximus, throughout his career, was at the forefront of the theological controversies and upheavals surrounding seventh-century Christology, upholding the Orthodox tradition of Chalcedon and the “fathers” in the face of the prevailing resurgence of Eutychian and monophysite Christology.¹⁰ Maximus’s public defense of the received Orthodox tradition gained notoriety, particularly his disputes with the monothelite bishop Pyrrhus in Carthage, which lead to the extension of a personal invitation to Maximus to participate in

⁸ For more extensive biographical treatment, see Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (ed. Carol Harrison; vol. 10 of *The Early Church Fathers*; London: Routledge, 1999); Aidan Nichols, *Maximus the Confessor in Modern Scholarship* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993); Alois Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche* (Band 2.2; Vienna: Herder, 1989); Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (vol. 2 of *The Christian Tradition*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) 8–36.

⁹ Ironically in light of much modern criticism of the “imperial” face of the early church (i.e., Constantinianism), Maximus was martyred for his defense of the Orthodox (and Catholic) bishopric *against* imperial interference; the problem for Maximus was the attempt by the political arm of the emperor in Constantinople to appoint monothelite and monophysite bishops and clerics (to thwart the orthodox opposition to the Henotikon) and to regulate the doctrinal fabric of the church to prevent political subversion. Maximus opposed this imperial imposition upon the church precisely because it was a heretical wielding of power that was anti-Chalcedonian; in fact, attempted imperial control of the church has a lengthy history of heterodox emperors who were opposed by conciliar bishops and exarches. See Iain R. Torrance, *Christology After Chalcedon* (Norwich: Canterbury, 1988). For more on Maximus’s life and martyrdom, see Sebastian Brock, “An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973) 299–346.

¹⁰ The main christological battles of Maximus’s era revolved around the disputed questions of the nature (*physis*), will (*thelos*) and energy/mind (*energos*) of the person of Jesus Christ, stemming from the turmoil of the Chalcedonian council. The heterodox theologians (those with a “mono” prefix, e.g., monophysite, monothelite, monergist) circumvented the Chalcedonian pattern of Christology, which defined the relationship between these terms as “without confusion, without change, without separation, without division.” I have subsumed these under the broad category of “Eutychian” for an easily grasped historical reference, in that Eutyches was an early theologian who regarded the infused unity of the two natures of Christ as a singular, mixed substance, so that following the incarnation there was only one nature in Christ, the above being variant strands in denoting the singular nature, mind, will and energy in the incarnate Christ. For extensive treatment of the Christological issues of the seventh century, see Demetrios Bathrellos, *The Byzantine Christ: Person, Nature, and Will in Saint Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

the Lateran Council in Rome in 649.¹¹ Maximus's alignment with the papal council in Rome contributed to his broad ecumenical acceptance as a genuine, mediatory theologian, an assessment that was decisively sealed by the affirmation of his work by the Sixth Council at Constantinople in 681 (approximately twenty years after his death).¹²

As a theologian, Maximus has been acclaimed as the "real father of Byzantine theology."¹³ More significantly, he is an ingenious interpreter of the vast tradition of Eastern theology, from Origen to the Cappadocians to Chalcedon. In effect, Maximus utilized the logic of the Chalcedonian formula and Plotinian neoplatonism as a rubric through which to interpret and synthesize (or re-read) the earlier theologians. The main form of Maximus's work is commentary and *scholia* on the works of Gregory Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite. Maximus, faced with the monumental challenge to the tradition of the fathers posed by heterodox clerics as well as imperial politics, worked to entrench and repristinate the Orthodox tradition through vigorous reiteration and interpretation.¹⁴ Maximus toiled diligently to reclaim the Orthodox vision of Christ and salvation as the center point of theology and Christian experience, defending it against the encroachment of the anti-Chalcedonian position, which, for Maximus, limited the possibility of human redemption by limiting Christ's person to less than fully divine and fully human.¹⁵ Concomitantly, Maximus was concerned with extirpating the more egregious philosophical errors of Origenism from the tradition; thus, he took on the role of reader, appropriator, and critic of the "fons du Platonisme."¹⁶ Maximus culled much from Plotinus and the Cappadocians, which he employed to redirect the tradition away from Origenism and closer to the Christian Platonism of Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius.

¹¹ For the documented transcripts of the public disputation of Maximus with Pyrrhus and the later trials of Maximus, see Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, *Maximus the Confessor: Documents from Exile* (vol. 8 of *Oxford Early Christian Texts*; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹² Andrew Louth, "St. Maximus the Confessor: Between East and West," *Studia Patristica* 32 (ed. Elizabeth Livingstone; Leuven: Peeters, 1997) 332–45; see also Jean-Claude Larchet, *Maxime le Confesseur, médiateur entre l'Orient et l'Occident* (Paris: Cerf, 1998).

¹³ John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (New York: Fordham, 1969) 99.

¹⁴ Georges Florovsky, *The Byzantine Fathers of the Sixth to Eighth Century* (vol. 10 of *Collected Works of Georges Florovsky*; trans. Raymond Miller; Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's, 1987) 213–14.

¹⁵ The upshot of Maximus's position is that any theological conception of the person of Christ (in the forms iterated under the strands of "Apollinarianism") that falls outside of the Chalcedonian pattern calls into question the possibility of the redemption of humanity. In effect, this reiterates the claim of Gregory of Nazianzus: "that which is not assumed is not healed" (Gregory, *Ep.* 202). Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 42 in PG 91:1316 D.

¹⁶ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie. Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenner* (2d ed.; Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1961) 483–643. See also Irénée-Henri Dalmay, "Saint Maxime Confesseur et la crise de l'origénisme monastique," in *Théologie de la vie monastique. Etudes sur la tradition patristique* (Paris: Aubier, 1961) 411–21.

The radiance of Maximus's mind is apparent in the panoramic vision of the tradition that he reconstructs, bringing into a "symphonic" synthesis the incarnational thought of the Cappadocians, the cosmic vista of Dionysius's mystical theology, the logic of Chalcedon, the cataphatic-apophatic dialectic of neoplatonism, and the spirituality of asceticism, all reoriented into a framework defined by love and beauty (which are, in essence, icons of the glory of God's being).¹⁷ Maximus constructs a theological vision of the universe as the mystery of the unfolding of God's being and glory toward creation (disrupted by the fall of humankind), in which creation is redeemed through the incarnation of the Son, who "brings" creation back to its original unity with the triune being. The whole of Christian existence, for Maximus, is oriented toward the movement of love and glory in God's cosmic redemption.¹⁸

The Cosmic Aesthetic of Maximus

Maximus developed a theological vision of the cosmic mystery of the triune being of God in which God is the "ineffable light" and the "infinitely beautiful" being above all being.¹⁹ God's beauty is the supernal light of the whole of creation, and, according to Maximus, creation is inscribed with this beauty in the form of a cosmic language that utters unceasing "speech" of the ineffable and transcendent being.²⁰ Creation is the result of the emanation and "spilling out" of the refulgent surplus of the divine being, a procession *ad extra* of the triune God, extending life and light outward.²¹ For Maximus, creation participates in the beauty and being of God in an *iconic* or refractive manner, whereby God's own beauty and image are passed through the cosmic order, causing the mind to "ascend" in contemplation of the transcendent.²²

The structure of creation lends itself to the aesthetic ascent of the mind to the hidden mystery of God's being, which remains above and beyond human

¹⁷ I have borrowed the term "symphonic" from Cyril O'Reagan, "Von Balthasar and Thick Retrieval: Post-Chalcedonian Symphonic Theology," *Gregorianum* 77 (1996) 227–60.

¹⁸ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 41: "And finally the human person and the created nature are united with the uncreated through love—O! the wonder of God's love for us human beings!—showing them to be one and the same through the possession of grace, the whole creation wholly interpenetrated [*perichoresas*] by God, and become completely whatever God is, except at the level of being [NB, Maximus's conception of *theosis* here maintains an ontological differentiation between God and human at the level of being—*ousias*], and receiving to itself the whole of God himself, and acquiring as a kind of prize for its ascent to God the most unique God himself." PG 91:1308C (unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine).

¹⁹ Ibid., 1076D, 1089B.

²⁰ Max. Conf., *Capitula Carit.* 3.99, PG 90:1048.

²¹ In this, Maximus recapitulates the neoplatonic paradigm of procession and return in the act of creation, which he adopts most notably from Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite; see Ps.-Dion., *Div. Nom.* 1.1–3, 4.7, 9.1–10; *Coel. Hier.* 1.1; in PG 3:585B–589D, 701C–704D, 909B–917A.

²² Max. Conf., *Ad Thalassium* 2, in *Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca* [CCSG] 7:51; Maximus here follows Gregory of Nyssa's observations in *Ora. Dom.* 2, in *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (ed. Werner Jaeger; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952) 1:1137. See also Ps.-Dion., *Coel. Hier.* 1.1–2, PG 3:121A–B.

comprehension and utterance. For Maximus, creation is circumfused with divine principles (*logoi*) that mediate indirect knowledge of God to the human mind.²³ The created order is given a revelatory character by the immanence of the principles or *logoi*, which are related to the divine mind and being and reflect the radiance of God, but God remains radically transcendent and beyond true scrutibility. Following the neoplatonic paradigm, God's being eclipses the capabilities of the human mind and language to grasp the mystery and the beauty that is God in God's true essence.²⁴ For Gregory and Dionysius, ascent in spiritual knowledge is a process of negation (*apophasis*) that leads to silence and "unknowing" (*agnosia*), which is an ecstatic experience of sublimity in the mystery of God. Maximus shares the apophatic aspect of their theology, but he redirects the neoplatonic design of the system away from agnostic silence and toward radiant love in God's redemptive movement.

The problematic, for Maximus, is less the radicalism of God's transcendence, (though he certainly accepts this), and more the fall of the human creature. Creation reveals a glimpse of the true beauty and true goodness of the divine being, but the human mind is unable to truly comprehend this beauty and goodness because of its fallen nature.²⁵ Maximus holds firmly to the doctrine of the corruption of human nature and the human mind as a result of the Adamic fall, which rendered true perception and knowledge of God an impossibility for the creature due to the privation of her faculties. Human beings are subject to instability and blindness on account of their inheritance of this sinful, privated nature and disposition.²⁶ Thus, Maximus reorients apophatic theology from a process of negating statements and perceptions to a negation of human nature itself. He brings these ideas into conjunction with Chalcedonian Christology, according to which fallen humanity is taken up and healed by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in which the hidden and "unknown" God becomes fully manifest.²⁷ This becomes, for Maximus, the

²³ Max. Conf., *Capit. Carit.* 3.24–25, PG 90:1041; *Ambig.* 42, PG 91:1325B–C. Here Maximus appropriates the neoplatonic idea that the logos of creation is instantiated in creation through the procession of the divine hypostases in the movement of creation; see Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.2–3.3; also, Ps.-Dion., *Coelestial Hierarchy*.

²⁴ Max. Conf., *Ad Thal.* 22, CCSG 7:142. Maximus states that "our human nature has no faculty for grasping what transcends nature. For nothing created is by its nature capable of inducing deification [which comes through spiritual knowledge], since it is incapable of comprehending God." See Ps.-Dion., *Div. Nom.* 7.1, and *Myst. Theo.* 1, PG 3:865B–868B, 1000A–1001A; also, Greg. Nyss., *De Vita Mos.*, PG 44.

²⁵ Max. Conf., *Ad Thal.* 42, CCSG 7:285–89; *Ad Thal.* 61, CCSG 22:85–105.

²⁶ Maximus here differs significantly from the neoplatonic tradition and from Gregory and Dionysius, who ascribe privation to the structure of creation itself on account of its differentiation from the divine; that is, lesser beings are inherently subject to privation due to incipient perfection rather than actualized perfection and being. In Origen, created beings are "fallen" prior to creation itself, and the process of creation is a movement of return to stasis (see *De principiis* 2.1.1). It is possible, though, to perceive in Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius an implicit doctrine of the fall in their idea of the "movement" of beings, though it is clearly more pronounced in Gregory of Nazianzus.

²⁷ Max. Conf., *Ad Thal.* 60, CCSG 22:73–81.

“cosmic liturgy” of participation in the divine being through the indwelling of God in human flesh. The true apophysis is thus the negation of human frailty and sin and the negation of distance between humanity and God. The point of contact, the origin of humanity’s return, is in the incarnation.

Maximus constructs a truly aesthetic cosmic Christology through which he re-reads the tradition of Orthodox theology. He employs Chalcedonian logic to reinterpret the infamous axiom of Gregory Nazianzus, “that which is not assumed is not healed,”²⁸ resulting in the recapitulation of the whole of creation in Jesus Christ. Maximus conceives of the incarnation as the divine taking on the human and uniting it to the divine (without truncation, abridgment, confusion or mixture of either nature), and in so doing, bringing together the whole order of creation in intimate unity with the divine being.²⁹ The descent of the Logos of God into human flesh is the point of ascent for the whole of creation toward a universal vision of the beauty and glory of God in all things.³⁰ The aberrancies and limitations of creation are interred in the human flesh of Jesus Christ and recreated and lifted up in his resurrection, so that all created existence is gifted with a share in the divine life itself. The mystery of creation is revealed in the being of Jesus Christ, so that the divine can be truly and wonderfully known through the manifest revelation of God in the flesh. For Maximus, the mystery of the incarnation as the redemption of creation is the revelation of the beauty of God, and thus the divine movement—from above to below and below to above—culminates in a harmonious and aesthetic union of the divine and the creation.

Human redemption consists in the true knowledge of God in the mystery of the incarnation, which is the ultimate revelation of God’s beauty and goodness. In this knowledge, for Maximus, is the ascent of the human mind and spirit to the ineffable beauty of God, which is most fundamentally the glory of God’s love. Through the grace of Christ’s existence in the hypostatic union, the human being is now possessed of a mind and nature capable of grasping God, and through the working of grace by the Spirit, human beings are able to contemplate the true beauty of God and are compelled “upward” in spirit into ineluctable union.³¹ In short, the Logos activates the *logoi* in created beings by assimilating them to itself, so that the human is turned from within toward God, freed for contemplation of God, and given true participation in God’s beauty and glory. The whole of Christian existence is thus conceived as a process of growth toward the goal of unabridged union. For Maximus, the Christian life is a spiritual process of orientation toward the love and beauty of God manifest in Jesus Christ, and interiorly mediated to the human mind and spirit. As the human contemplates the beauty of God, she moves continually away from the earthly and mundane to the inner glory of God’s triune being, in

²⁸ Greg. Naz., *Ep.* 101.

²⁹ See esp. Max. Conf., *Ad Thal.* 2, *CCSG* 7:51.

³⁰ Max. Conf., *Cap. Carit.* 1.31.

³¹ Max. Conf., *Opus.* 5, *PG* 91:1053C–1060D.

which she is destined to dwell.³² As a result, she becomes ever more enraptured by the beauty and love of God and is drawn ever onward toward God. This becomes the basis for the aesthetic (and ascetic) vision of virtue and holy passion, in which the process of human salvation, as an imbrication of justification/conversion and sanctification, is bound up in the increasing sense of beauty and harmony between Christ and the Christian.

The pivotal center of Maximus's cosmic vision is the person of Jesus Christ as defined by the Chalcedonian formula, for it is only because Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human (on both sides) that this redemption can be conceived. Out of the fullness of God's being, God assumes the totality of the human condition in God's self without ceasing to be God, and in so doing, God brings the human into union with the divine itself, and thereby heals the fissures of the human constitution and grants it the gift of participation. For Maximus, the goal of the incarnation³³ is to allow creation to exist in symmetry and harmony with the divine in the glory of God's own being and life, which is the ultimate end of creation itself.³⁴ Maximus understands the redemptive nature of Christ's descent and ascent to be the true movement of God to bring all creation into the harmonious stasis of God's inner trinitarian life, to partake in the inexhaustible beauty and glory of God—a deification of the world in Christ.

■ The Doctrine of God as Infinite Beauty in Edwards and Maximus

Jonathan Edwards, from his earliest writings, defined the being of God in terms of perfection, infinitude, and beauty.³⁵ In his essay "On Atoms," Edwards contends with the metaphysical materialism of Hobbes, arguing that God is the single infinite and self-existent substance, precluding the eternality of ordinary matter.³⁶ Edwards,

³² Maximus writes that in the end God's "ultimate beauty will satisfy our desire. In so far as we are able we will participate without being restricted, as it were, being uncontainably contained. All our actions and every sublime thought will tend eagerly towards that end in which all desire comes to rest and beyond which they cannot be carried. For there is no other end toward which all free movement is directed than the rest found in total contemplation" [Maximus, here, is quoting Greg. Naz., *Oration* 21]. "For nothing besides God will be known, nor will there be anything opposed to God that could entice one to desire it. Instead, God's ineffable mystery will be made known in full, and all intellectual and sensible things will be encompassed by him" (Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7, PG 91:1073D).

³³ It should be noted that in Maximus, as in the whole of Orthodox tradition, the term "incarnation" is not restricted in reference to simply the birth or human existence of Jesus Christ, but includes the whole of Christ's life and work; it is therefore synonymous with the economic movement from the incarnation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. See esp. Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 42.

³⁴ Ibid., 1092C, 1097B; *Ambig.* 8, PG 91:1104C.

³⁵ See especially the series of essays by Edwards, "On Being," "On Atoms," and "On the Mind," in *Works* 6:180–235. This is a central claim of the seminal work by Roland André Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) 27–46., 117–47, 162–216. And more recently, Louis J. Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards on the Experience of Beauty* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003) 10–28.

³⁶ Edwards, "Of Atoms," *Works* 6:212.

here, echoes the early Christian neoplatonic understanding of God as the infinite source of all being and existence, in that God is the sole uncreated, ungenerated being, existing in total perfection and aseity.³⁷ As Edwards notes, “God is infinite and has all possible existence, perfection, and excellence . . . as [God] is in every way the first and Supreme being and his excellence is in all respects the original excellence, the fountain of all good.”³⁸ God exists perfectly in God’s own being, and is not subject to motion or instability, as is all matter. In neoplatonic understanding, perfection consists in freedom from movement and in simplicity of essence. For the Christian neoplatonists, God’s being was perceived as simple in substance, that is, without complex parts or components. Maximus the Confessor states:

We know that [the Godhead] is beyond all division in complete simplicity, not a whole made out of parts, or a part derived from a whole. For the Godhead is beyond all division and composition and part and whole . . . for it is free from any kind of connection or property and is unbounded, with nothing before or after or alongside it, since it is beyond everything.³⁹

Edwards, likewise, argues that God is “perfect and absolute simplicity,” being without composite complexity.⁴⁰ As in the Eastern tradition, Edwards posits that “the divine essence is undivided and independent,” that is to say that God is complete and non-composite in essence and existence.⁴¹

Edwards comes even closer to the Eastern tradition in his conception of the doctrine of the Trinity, in which he identifies the perfect simplicity of the divine essence as that which is shared in communion between the three persons—a perfect, divine community.⁴² In Eastern thought, the perfection of the divine being leads to self-replication, in which the singular being of the Father generates the Son and the Spirit in the perfect ideation (*logos*) and perception of the divine being within the divine mind; Maximus asserts that it is the *resplendent beauty and glory* of the Father’s being that processes forth a perfect image (*ikon*) in the Son, and the love of the Father for the Son brings forth the Spirit.⁴³ This is not posited as movement

³⁷ Edwards, “Notes on the Mind,” *Works* 6:354. This is directly parallel to the assertion of Gregory of Nyssa, who identifies the infinite perfection and totality of the divine being as the perfect and uncaused source of all “lower” being (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomius* 2.2). See also Gregory Nazianzus, *Orations* 28.6, in *Sources Chrétiennes* (ed. P. Gallay; vol. 250; Paris, 1978); Augustine, *De Trinitate* 8.2; Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 10.3, 37 PG 91:1113C, 1180A. Maximus states here that God is the one perfect unmoved being. For more on Edwards’s position on this subject, see Stephen R. Holmes, “Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee,” in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, 106–10.

³⁸ Edwards, “Misc. No. 1208,” *Works* 23:123.

³⁹ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 10, PG 91: 1187D–1188A.

⁴⁰ Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, *Works* 1:376; also “Misc. No. 135,” *Works* 13:295.

⁴¹ Edwards, “On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity,” *Works* 21:147.

⁴² Edwards, “Misc. No. 308, 571,” *Works* 13:110, 393; “Essay on the Trinity,” *Works* 21:133. See Amy Plantinga Pauw, “One Alone Cannot be Excellent: Edwards on Divine Simplicity,” in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, 120–21.

⁴³ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 1, PG 91:1036B.

within the divine itself, but as an eternal quality of the divine being to be fecund and effulgent in self-perception and antecedent love. Edwards proceeds in a similar direction arguing that “the Deity [is] truly and properly repeated by God’s having an absolutely perfect idea of himself; and this idea is a substantial idea and has the very essence of God, is truly God.”⁴⁴ Thus, the Son, as the second person, is the Logos of God’s being, that is, the idea or image of God’s perfected being that is grounded in God’s perception of God’s own being and glory. Edwards notes, likewise, that the Son is not only the Logos or idea in the divine mind, but is “the *brightness, effulgence and shining* forth of God’s glory [as it] appears to himself.”⁴⁵ For Edwards, as for Maximus, the glorious nature of the divine being is the root of the ideational repetition of God in the mind of the Father, so that the Son is truly the same in essence and kind as the Father, thus not resulting in a complexity of being, but rather an unfolding and emanation of the original and primal glory and beauty of God’s self.⁴⁶ The love of God for God’s glory, which is in the image or Logos, yields the procession of the Spirit, so that the Spirit is, in Edwards’s words, “God’s infinite love and delight in [God’s] self;”⁴⁷ the Spirit is itself the love of God *ad intra* that holds together the divine persons in a singular and interpenetrative *koinonia* of essence.⁴⁸

The identification of the Spirit as the love of God aligns Edwards to a limited degree with the Latin tradition, following Augustine. In his discussion of the Trinity, Augustine posits that the Spirit is the bond of love between the Father and the Son, and furthermore, that the Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son.⁴⁹ In the Western tradition, then, the Spirit is conceived of as proceeding from the unique relationality between the Father and the Son (while, of course, being equal in essence and of the same substance). Edwards, likewise, notes that “the Holy Spirit is the divine love itself, the love of the Father and the Son . . . [as] the Holy Ghost is that love of God and Christ that is breathed forth primarily towards each other.”⁵⁰ While it is beyond doubt that Edwards follows the traditional Western

⁴⁴ Edwards, “Essay on the Trinity,” *Works* 21:114.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 119. See n. 42.

⁴⁶ I take this to be the direction of Edwards’s argument that “as God with perfect clearness, fullness and strength understands himself, views his own essence . . . that idea which God has of himself is absolutely himself. This representation (*viz.*, *ikon* or *logos*) of the divine nature and essence is the divine nature and essence again. . . . And this is the second person of the Trinity . . . [who] is the eternal, necessary, perfect, substantial and personal idea which God has of himself” (*ibid.* 116–17). Compare Max. Conf., *Capit. Theo.* 3.2.2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 120–21; Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 5, PG 91:1059C.

⁴⁹ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 4.29, 5.12–13, 6.7, 9.5.

⁵⁰ Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *Works* 21:186–87. Here, Edwards makes a corollary statement concerning the holiness of God as it consists in the primary state of love: “so does the holiness of God consist in his love, especially in the perfect and intimate union and love there is between the Father and the Son. [And] the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son is the bond of this union” (*ibid.*). See also Edwards, “Essay on the Trinity,” *Works* 21:121, 131–38, 142–44. It is

assertion of the *filioque*, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and* the Son, there is present in Edwards's theology an underlying notion of the primacy of the Father in the trinitarian being of God. For the Eastern tradition, this is the signal element of the unity of the Triune community, in that the Father is the "fountain" or source of the Son and the Spirit, who share in the essence of the Father and are, in fact, "spirated" from the substance of the Father. The trinitarian persons, in the Eastern mind, are equal in dignity and form and are of the same essence, sharing in the simplicity and perfection of the divine substance itself; yet, the Father is the primal ground of the whole Godhead.⁵¹ The theological grammar of the Trinity, in the East, is bound up in the differentiation of the Father according to hypostatic properties that pertain directly to the relational nexus of the divine community, as the Father is the ground and origin of the hypostases of the Son and the Spirit. Accordingly, the Eastern theologians charged that the Western conception injected two sources of divinity into the Trinity. Evoking the Eastern tradition, Edwards states explicitly that "the Father is the fountain of the Godhead . . . [as] the Father sustains the dignity of the Deity, and sends forth the other two. All is from him, all is in him originally."⁵² Thus, according to Edwards the Father is the ontological ground of the Son and the Spirit, and the most immediate cause of both the Son and the Spirit is the Father.⁵³ Still more directly, he states:

The Father is the Deity subsisting in the prime, unoriginated and most *absolute manner, or the Deity in its direct existence*. The Son is the Deity generated by God's understanding, or having an idea of himself, and subsisting in that idea. *The Holy Ghost is the Deity subsisting in act, or the diving essence* flowing out and breathed forth, in God's infinite love to and delight in himself.⁵⁴

likely that Edwards follows in the line of William Ames (who, in turn, is reiterating Calvin): "The Father is, as it were, *Deus intelligens*, God understanding; the Son who is the express image of the Father is *Deus intellectus*, God understood; and the Holy Spirit, flowing and breathed forth from the Father and the Son, is *Deus dilectus*, God loved." Ames, *The Marrow of Theology* (ed. and trans. Douglas Horton; repr. Baker, 1997) 89.

⁵¹ John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* 1.8; Gregory Naz., *Orat.* 20, 43, PG 35:1073A; 36:419B–C; Ps.-Dion., *Div. Nam.* 1–7; Max. Conf., *Opus.* 7.

⁵² Edwards, "Essay on the Trinity," *Works* 21:137, 143. Edwards writes also, "we see how and in what sense the Father is the fountain of the Godhead, and how naturally and properly God the Father is spoken of in Scripture as of the Deity without distinction, as being the only true God." Edwards, "Misc. no. 143," *Works* 13:298–99. Compare Greg. Naz., *Orat.* 27; Greg. Nyssa, *Cont. Eun.* 2.2–5; Gregory Palamis, *Triads* 1.3.

⁵³ Edwards states further that "God the Father be the first person from whom the others proceed and herein has a peculiar personal honor. . . . The Father has good, and through the Son receives the infinite good, the Holy Spirit, from the Father [and] the Father enjoys the infinite good through the Son. He is the end of the other two in their acting *ad intra*, and also in his acting *ad extra*." Edwards, "On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity," *Works* 21:146.

⁵⁴ Edwards, "Essay on the Trinity," *Works* 21:131. In Edwards's exposition of the concept of God, he posits the Father's existence as the primordial actuality, which is to say, as true beauty; the procession of hypostases is the repetition of this beauty and the knowing of it. Edwards thus establishes the aseity of God's being in the Father's being as pure actuality and beauty and the

This statement, in accord with the image of the Father as the fountainhead, corresponds to the Eastern understanding of the Father as the *archê* (source or principle) of the Godhead, the ungenerated being whose effulgence bequeaths the hypostases of the Son and the Spirit; the Father, in this understanding, is the one hypostasis that does not draw identity from the others, but shares his own essence and dignity with them.⁵⁵ Edwards moves subtly in a different direction than his Western forbearers, against the theologies of both Calvin and Turretin. He does so even in the midst of his affirmation of the very doctrine that divides the East and West to this day.

The resilient feature of Edwards's affirmation of the *filioque* is that though his language, in many instances, clearly bears the impress of Augustine, Calvin, and the Reformed tradition, his casting of the doctrine of the Trinity, and in particular his description of the person of the Holy Spirit, bears a striking resemblance to the theology of the Eastern tradition. As Edwards expounds on the procession of the Spirit, he speaks with a still more distinctly Eastern accent. He maintains that the spiration or procession of the Spirit is most directly related to the Father's beholding his own image in the Son, and loving the image; out of the reciprocity of love of the Father *for* the Son (*ikon*) and the Son *in* the Father, the Spirit comes forth.⁵⁶ In fact, Edwards often remarks that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, in the economic movement. The primary quality of this construction, for Edwards, is that the Spirit relates to the intimate connection of the Father with the Son, and that the Spirit proceeds directly, in essence, from the Father, and secondarily through the Son.⁵⁷ The importance of this construction is decisively demonstrated by Maximus on the question of the *filioque*:

The Westerners cited the consonant testimonies of the Latin Fathers, as well as that of Cyril of Alexandria in his commentary on the Gospel of Saint John. They showed thereby that they did not view the Son as cause of the Spirit, for they knew that the Father alone is cause of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, but they showed that the Spirit proceeds through the Son, and thereby showed the conjunction of their nature, which is no way different.⁵⁸

Edwards's argument is consonant with Maximus, in that the Father is conceived of as the generative source of the hypostases of the Son and the Spirit. Edwards

power or disposition to know and exert or replicate; this aligns, as well, with Thomas's assertion of God's essence as his existence, and hence God's aseity as pure existence or being (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, book 1, ch. 22, 118–20).

⁵⁵ See n. 50. Also, Vladimir Lossky, "Théologie dogmatique," in *Théologie mystique de l'Église d'Orient* (Paris, 1960) 46–47, 58–60; Sergei Bulgakov, *Le Paraclet* (Paris, 1946) 360–75.

⁵⁶ Edwards, "Essay on the Trinity," *Works* 21:130–31, 134–36, 142–43; "On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity," *ibid.*, 146–48; "Treatise on Grace," *ibid.*, 184–85, 187; "Misc. no. 104," *Works* 13:272. See also "Misc. no. 1062," quoted in Pauw, *Supreme Harmony of All* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 110–12.

⁵⁷ Edwards, "Essay on the Trinity," 131.

⁵⁸ Max. Conf., *Epistola ad Marinum*, PG 91:136AB.

does construe the Spirit to be from both the Father and the Son, yet, in line with Maximus, the Son is seen as the conduit through which the Spirit is brought forth by the Father, primarily in his act of love for the Son. The upshot of this is that Edwards recasts the received Western trinitarian paradigm so as to move it along a trajectory parallel to the Eastern tradition, even utilizing the language of the Reformed tradition while lending it a Byzantine flavor. In this respect, he follows the lead of the Cambridge Platonists, in particular Cudworth, who adopted this exact paradigm from the Eastern theologians.⁵⁹ Edwards echoes the Christian neoplatonic conception of the Trinity in his understanding of the Son as the idea or *logos* of the divine being in the mind of the Father. This recalls the idealism of Platonism, which left its impress on the Eastern tradition itself and is the source of the conception of the Father as the *archê* or fount of the Godhead.

The keystone of this construction, and its relevance to the central theme of this essay, is the controlling notion of beauty. For the Eastern tradition, the hierarchy of the divine being, grounded in the ungenerated principle of the Father, results from the beauty and splendor of the divine. For Maximus, it is the brilliance of the divine essence in the Father that produces the hypostasis of the Son as the *ikon* of the Father's beauty, which in turn results in the spiration of the Spirit. The beauty of the Father's being overflows, proceeding outward in continual duplication by means of the perfection of the idea or image contained in the divine mind. As the three hypostases share (*koinonia*) in the same essence, so they are equal in beauty and resplendence. For Edwards, beauty is the quality of the very essence of the Godhead, of the Trinity, *in se*.⁶⁰ Edwards argues that as "the essence of the Godhead [is] in its first subsistence"—that is, the Father—the Godhead is above all "infinitely the most beautiful and excellent . . . the foundation and fountain of all being and beauty."⁶¹ Beauty is the nature of God *qua* God, for Edwards, and is the structural characteristic of the divine being itself. Delattre notes that beauty, for Edwards, is "the first principle of being, the inner structural principle of being itself,"⁶² which is located by Edwards *prima facie* in the divine being. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards identifies beauty as the defining and distinguishing principle of the divine being, and as that which, in fact, makes God who God is.⁶³ The *perichoretic harmony* of the divine hypostases is linked by Edwards to the constituent beauty of the divine

⁵⁹ See Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London, 1678) 3.1, p. 144. See J. Deotis Roberts, *From Puritanism to Platonism in Seventeenth Century England* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968). For remarks on Cudworth's influence upon Edwards's thought, see Elwood, *Philosophical Theology*, 40–42; Fiering, *Edwards' Moral Thought*, 46–49.; and, McClymond, "Edwards, Palamas, and Neoplatonism," *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, 141–43.

⁶⁰ Sang Hyun Lee, *Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) 82–85, 110–11, 176–81; Roland Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 117, 148–61.

⁶¹ Edwards, "Essay on the Trinity," *Works* 21:135.

⁶² Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 1–2.

⁶³ Edwards, *Works* 2:298: "God is God, and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above 'em, chiefly by his divine beauty."

being, in that the trinitarian persons *ad intra* delight in and incline towards each other in “mutual consent” on account of the glory and beauty of the Godhead.⁶⁴ The argument by Edwards in *The Nature of True Virtue* turns upon this notion of the regard of God for God’s own being, in that the consent to being, which is primarily and fundamentally grounded in the life of the Trinity, has as its object the “excellence” of the original beauty of the divine being.⁶⁵ The inner beauty of the triune being is the root of the happiness and excellency of God’s internal life, and is the suffused quality of the being itself. For Edwards, the love and delight of God in God’s beauty is the foundation of God’s infinite glory and the cause of God’s disposition to create—it is the very ineffable and supernal mystery of God.⁶⁶ Beauty is thus the infinite *energeia* and *causa* of the divine life *ad intra*, and provides the structure for all being and creation, to which we now turn.

■ The Beauty of God as the Fount of Creation in Edwards and Maximus

For Maximus as well as Edwards, the foundation of the whole structure of creation is nothing less than the infinitely beautiful and glorious being of the triune God. Maximus understood creation to be the result of the emanation of God’s fullness *ad extra*, the overflow from the abundant and excellent brilliance of the divine essence. For Maximus, the will of God is nothing less than the disposition of the triune being to go out of itself, to extend “well-being” to that which is other.⁶⁷ Maximus refashions the neoplatonic paradigm of procession and return in his conception of creation, in that God, in God’s triune existence, overflows in creative disposition in order to reveal the image and splendor of the divine essence; the end of this process, for Maximus, is the “return” of the image to rest in the unrestricted vision of the beauty of God, an eternal *stasis* in beatified deification. Maximus locates the design of creation in the fecund mind and life of the Trinity, in which the beauty of God is duplicated as an idea (*logos*) in the eternal *nous*; God’s will is to communicate and express the divine being for the purpose of God’s own supernal glory.⁶⁸ The act of creation is thus an act of God’s will, the deliberate communication of the divine idea (*logos*) through the emanation of God’s eternal, effulgent being. Moreover, for Maximus, the structure of creation itself is undergirded by the being of God

⁶⁴ Edwards, “End for which God Created the World” [End of Creation], *Works* 8:422.

⁶⁵ Edwards, “The Nature of True Virtue,” *Works* 8:546–51; “Controversies,” *Works* 21: 325–27; see also Edward Farley, *Faith and Beauty: A Theological Aesthetic* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2004) 43–48.

⁶⁶ Edwards, “Misc. no. 1066, 1208,” *Works* 20:446; 23:133–34.

⁶⁷ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7, PG 91:1073C, 1077C–1080D. Lars Thunberg notes that the emanation of the divine being, in bringing about creation, is grounded in the teleological goal of extending “well-being,” or *divinitatis ad extra*, to reproduce the divine image. See Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Crestwood: St Vladimir’s, 1995) 74; Max. Conf., *Centuries on Love* 3.24–25.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1085B–1088C.

in the immanent principles (*logoi*) that derive from the being of God; these *logoi* continuously communicate the divine beauty and radiance throughout creation.⁶⁹

Edwards, in his "Dissertation on the End of Creation," likewise grounds creation in the inner brilliance of God's being. He writes:

As there is an infinite fullness of all possible good in God, a fullness of every perfection, of all excellency and beauty, and of infinite happiness, and as this fullness is capable of communication or emanation *ad extra*, so it seems a thing amiable, and valuable in itself that it should be communicated or flow forth, that this infinite fountain of good should send forth abundant streams, that this infinite fountain of light should, diffusing its excellent fullness, pour forth light all around.⁷⁰

Edwards argues that the ultimate goal of God's act of creation is the communication of the divine fullness and beauty outside the Godhead, that is, that "there might be a glorious and abundant emanation of his infinite fullness of good *ad extra* . . . [that God would] diffuse his own fullness originally in God as a perfection of his nature."⁷¹ Edwards conceives of the being of God as naturally and essentially inclined or disposed to emanate *ad extra*, not out of contingency or necessity, but out of God's regard for God's own perfection and beauty.⁷² Edwards contends that the ultimate desire of God is that the interior beauty and fullness shared by the triune Godhead be communicated and repeated, and that it be known and shared exteriorly.⁷³

Edwards characterizes the emanation of God's being in the act of creation as stemming from the antecedent "excellent disposition" of God to extend God's fullness and share God's being.⁷⁴ Lee understands this to be a "dispositional ontology" and argues that the essential property of God, in Edwards's theology, is the "disposition" to communicate and repeat the actual being of God; moreover, he contends that Edwards conceives of God as necessarily ontologically reproductive.⁷⁵ This is true, to a degree, in that Edwards does regard the divine design as an extension and repetition of the divine being *ad extra*, as the overflowing of the fullness and surplus of the divine glory and beauty. What is more striking, however, is the symmetry between the notion of disposition in Edwards and the idealism

⁶⁹ See esp. Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7, 42.

⁷⁰ Edwards, "End of Creation," *Works* 8:433.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* See also Edwards, "Misc. no. 553," *Works* 18:97.

⁷² Edwards, "End of Creation," *Works* 8:440–41. Elwood ably explains Edwards's notion of the self-giving and communicating nature of God, offering several felicitous comparisons of Edwards with Hartshorne, Whitehead, Schelling and Augustine; see Elwood, *Philosophical Theology*, 90–112. While Elwood's discussion demonstrates keen discernment and rigor, his analysis of Edwards ultimately owes much to process theology. He does, however, bring to the fore key observations in discussing Edwards's thought in conjunction with that of Augustine and Calvin and the influence of Platonism (esp. 98–112).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 462–63; "Misc. no. 669, 1208," *Works* 18:282; 23:133–34.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 433.

⁷⁵ Lee, *Philosophical Theology*, 174–85.

of the neoplatonism of Maximus. For Edwards, the “disposition” of the divine to emanate can be traced to the idea or image that resides in the eternal mind of God, in which God has in view an idea or image of God’s own resplendent being and glory; prior to any other thing or act is God’s own idea of and regard for God’s own being and beauty, which is contained within that idea.⁷⁶ Creation, as the emanation of God, is brought about in and through the idea and the vision in God’s mind of God’s own beauty and glory. The act of creation, then, is nothing less than the communication of this particular idea, as an aesthetic delight in God’s being for God’s being.⁷⁷

I contend, *pace* Lee,⁷⁸ that Edwards’s view of creation is essentially neoplatonist in the mold of the early Christian tradition. In Edwards’s understanding, creation is the direct result of the expression of the eternal mind, that is, it is the communication of the image of God’s being in the mind of God that causes God to diffuse God’s essence *ad extra*. In the neoplatonic conception, the outward movement of the divine being is the source of communicative knowledge of the eternal mind, which suffuses everything.⁷⁹ Edwards, similarly, argues that creation is simply the communication of the divine mind through the emanation of the divine being, for in making God God’s own end, God actively expresses God’s own image in the creative act.⁸⁰ The purposive emanation of God’s being, for Edwards, is the immanent communication and expression of the internal beauty and glory of the divine Triad; thus, minds and beings are created in order to receive the knowledge of the divine brilliance.⁸¹ Edwards notes that the “divine fullness which is communicated is the divine knowledge. . . . And this knowledge is most properly a communication of God’s infinite knowledge which primarily consists in the knowledge of himself. . . . ‘Tis

⁷⁶ Edwards, “End of Creation,” *Works* 8:439–441; 443–44; “Misc. no. 699,” *Works* 18:282; “The Nature of True Virtue,” *Works* 8:556–57. Edwards states, in “End,” “it is such a delight in his own internal fullness and glory that disposes him to an abundant effusion and emanation of that glory” (452).

⁷⁷ Edwards, “Misc. no. 553,” *Works* 18:97. Edwards states, in Misc. no. 699: “The excellency of God’s nature appears in that, that he loves and seeks whatever is in itself excellent. . . . And as he loves his own perfection and excellency, so he loves the effulgence or shining forth of that perfection” (282). See also Edwards, “Essay on the Trinity,” 103–4, 106–8 (in Helm). Compare Max. Conf., *Centuries on Love*, 3–4.

⁷⁸ Sang Hyun Lee, “God’s Relation to the World,” in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards* (ed. Sang Hyun Lee and Harry S. Stout; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) 59–65. A better account is that of Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards’s Moral Thought*, 330–40.

⁷⁹ See Ps.-Dion., *Myst. Theo.* 1–2; Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.1–3.1; also E. R. Dodds, *Proclus’ “Elements of Theology”* ([SCM] London, 1963).

⁸⁰ Edwards, “End of Creation,” *Works* 8:431–35; “True Virtue,” *ibid.*, 556–60.

⁸¹ Edwards, “End of Creation,” 431–33, 458–63, 528–36. Edwards states: “But [God], from his goodness, as it were enlarges himself in a more excellent and divine manner. This is by communicating and diffusing himself; and so instead of finding, making objects of his benevolence; not by taking into himself what he finds distinct from himself, and so partaking of their good, and being happy in them; but by flowing forth, and expressing himself in them, and making them to partake of him, and rejoicing in himself expressed in them, and communicated to them” (*ibid.*, 462).

the image of God's own knowledge of himself."⁸² In fact, this very expression of the divine knowledge leads to the return of God's beauteous image of God's self in the knowledge and contemplation of the created:

The emanation or communication of the divine fullness, consisting in the knowledge of God, love to God, and joy in God . . . has its relation to God as its fountain, as it is an emanation from God; and as the communication itself, or thing communicated, is something divine, something of God, something of his internal fullness . . . for the knowledge communicated is the knowledge of God; and so God is the object of the knowledge and love communicated. . . . In the creature's knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in, and praising God, the glory of God is both exhibited and acknowledged; his fullness is received and returned. Here is both an emanation and remanation. The refulgence shines upon and into the creature, and is reflected back to the luminary. The beams of glory come from God, and are something of God, and are refunded back again to their original. So that the whole is of God, and in God, and to God.⁸³

Edwards's thought, here, parallels the neoplatonic paradigm of the procession and return of the divine, in the divine emanation *ad extra* and the return to the source. The divine end to which the expression of the divine knowledge strives is the resounding of the primordial divine beauty and being, in which an "other" now participates.

Edwards surmises that the participation of the creature in the glory and beauty of God, the knowledge of which is communicated to the creature, is symmetrically aligned with God's own being as God's ultimate end in the act of creation. Edwards suggests that God's ultimate regard for God's own being, beauty, and glory correlates with the subsidiary concern for the creature, in that the creature's happiness is consonant with God's own through the creature's participation in God.⁸⁴ Thus, God communicates knowledge of God's self to the creature and upholds the entire structure of creation for the consummate purpose of uniting the creature, now enlightened by divine knowledge, with the divine, so that the divine being and the brilliant beauty of the divine is all in all:

What has been said shows that as all things are from God as their first cause and fountain; so all things tend to him, and in their progress come nearer

⁸² Ibid., 441. See also "True Virtue," 591–92, 622–23. Compare Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7: "But we say that God knows existent things as the images of his own mind and the [corresponding] acts of his will. If God made all things by the knowledge of his mind, and it is thus right to say that God knows his own will [which is in his mind], and that he made each creature by the express act of his will in his knowledge, then God truly knows existent things as he knows his own mind" (PG 91:1085B).

⁸³ Edwards, "End of Creation," 531.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 526–36.

and nearer to him through all eternity: which argues that he who is their first cause is their last end.⁸⁵

Here, the argument of Lee and Marsden against a neoplatonic design in Edwards's doctrine of creation loses traction.⁸⁶ Both Lee and Marsden suggest that Edwards differentiates his construction from the view of Plotinus in that God, for Edwards, is different from the One or the Eternal Mind in Plotinus; and, additionally, that the doctrine of creation in Edwards is fully onto-relational, which, they aver, distinguishes it from the Idealist model of ideas formed in the *nous* of God as perfect forms of creation. In their estimation this precludes the concept of relationality. Lee further argues that the dispositional construction exists on a different plane in Edwards's thought than in that of Plotinus. This is true, to a degree, but I argue that they overlook the *Christian* strand of neoplatonism in Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor, which resonates more profoundly with the model found here in Edwards. That this is true is readily observed in Maximus's constructive vision of God in tri-unity, in which the One is really the divine Triad, and in which the Logos is positively identified as Jesus Christ himself and symmetrically aligned with the act of creation; in which creation emerges from the fountain of God's emanating beauty, which is tied to the beatific vision or idea in the mind of God ideating God's own beauty. The created realm is thus a perfected vision of God's resplendent glory poured out onto that which is *ad extra* to God, and which is created by God in the Word through the Spirit, revealing an explicit trinitarian structure.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Ibid., 443–44. Note Maximus: "Because the One goes forth out of goodness in bringing in being, creating and preserving them . . . the many [viz., creation] are directed toward the One and are providentially guided in that direction. It is as though they are were drawn to an all-powerful center that had built into it the beginnings of the lines that go out from it and that gathers them all together again as their end. . . . God is the goal of everything as it is given in the beginning and the end of everything as the ultimate goal" (Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7, PG 91:1081C, 1084A).

⁸⁶ See Lee, *Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 172; Lee, "God's Relation to the World," 332–38.; also George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 77–78.

⁸⁷ Max. Conf., *Ad Thal.* 2, in CCSG 7:51. Here Maximus discloses the trinitarian structure of creation in the beginning and in the end as consonantal events that move in the direction of deified creation in the resplendent glory of the Triune God. This is substantiated by Maximus in his account of redemptive history as the transacting of this purpose: "It is on the basis of this grace that the divine Logos, becoming man, said 'My Father is working even now, and I am working.' The Father approves this work, the Son properly carries it out, and the Holy Spirit completes both the Father's approval of it all and the Son's execution of it, in order that the God in Trinity might through all and in all things, be contemplated as the whole reality proportionately in each individual creature, and in the universe altogether, just as the soul naturally endwells both the whole of the body and each individual part without diminishing itself." See Max. Conf., *Ad Thal.* 60, CCSG 22:79, 94–105; Greg. Naz., *Cate. Ora.* 2.1, PG 36:100; Greg. Nyssa, *Orat.* 27–31. Compare Edwards: "Our dependence is equally upon each in this affair: the Father appoints and provides the Redeemer, and himself accepts the price and grants the thing purchased; the Son is the Redeemer by offering up himself, and is the price; and the Holy Spirit immediately communicates to us the thing purchased by communicating himself, and he is the thing purchased" ("Essay on the Trinity," in *Works* 23:136).

Additionally, Marsden's postulation that the Platonic model is devoid of relational structure, which grounds his claim that Edwards maneuvers in the opposite direction, is untenable in the light of the structure of Nyssa's and Maximus's emphasis on the purposive nature of the creation of the world according to the ideas in God's mind—in fact, for these theologians, the intentionality is explicitly relational.⁸⁸ Maximus states that the mystery of the ages, which is the mystery of creation itself, is that God intended to have a relationship with the "other" and to replicate God's beautiful knowledge of God's being in another.⁸⁹ Thus, for Edwards, just as for Maximus, God spills out God's being in intentional creation *out of* the fecund love of God for God's internal image and beauty, through which creation is itself brought forth from the splendor of the image and the primal glory of God.

Lastly, creation itself, for Edwards, is upheld and given "solidity" in the mind of God. Edwards notes, in his essay "Of Being," that the solidity of the created order is the space lent to creation as it exists, is bequeathed structural maintenance, and is preserved in the consciousness of God.⁹⁰ Edwards suggests, here, that being originates and is located in the mind or consciousness of God, and that it is this property that provides the cohesive superstructure of creation (meaning that creation would collapse if it were not lodged in God's mind), and that directs the providential course of history. The upshot of this construction is that being itself is principally the communication of the divine mind to the structure of creation, which mirrors the divine consciousness. The *continua creatio* is, for Edwards, the continual action of the divine mind in actively upholding and renewing creation in God's consciousness, and the effusion of the Spirit, who directs the laws of the universal structure.⁹¹ This closely resembles Maximus's understanding of the *logoi* of creation as consonantal laws in the mind of God, which are *circum-in-scribed* in creation, and which regulate movement and being as direct communications of the divine idea of creation itself. The *logoi* not only give structure to the creation through the ideation of God's consciousness, but effectually communicate the image of the divine and the beauty of God's mind and being to the created world.⁹²

⁸⁸ Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 76–78. Cf. Greg. Nyssa, *In Pascha I. Gregorii Nysseni Opera* III:604B–617A; *Cate. Ora.* 37, *GNO* II:92D; *In diem nat. Christ.* *GNO* III:1144

⁸⁹ Max. Conf., *Ad Thal.* 22, *CCSG* 7:137–43; *Centuries on Love* 2–3.

⁹⁰ Edwards, "Of Being," in *A Jonathan Edwards Reader* (ed. John E. Smith, Harry Stout, and Kenneth Minkema; Yale: Yale University Press, 1995) 10–11.

⁹¹ Edwards, "Misc. no. 64," and "Misc. no. 481," in *Works* 13: 235; "Misc. no. 976," in *Works* 23:280–88.

⁹² Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7, *PG* 91:1077C–1081C. Note, also, the resonance of Edwards's essays "On Atoms" and "On Being" with the constructive vision of Maximus on spatiality: "By space we mean that everything is shown as being in a place. For the totality of everything is not beyond the universe but being circumscribed from itself and in itself, in accordance with the infinite power of the cause that circumscribes everything, the limit itself is outside itself. And this is the place of the universe that exists in the space that God circumscribes with his being, directing their position where they are. For being is derived from God but he is beyond being itself and beyond anything that is said or conceived of him. . . . But beings possess being in a certain way so that where they

In a consonant manner, Edwards contends that the divine mind communicates the beauty of God through the very structures of creation, such that beauty is located in the receptivity of the creaturely mind to perceive and sense symmetry and harmony in the world. This is the *primary beauty* of which Edwards writes in *The Nature of Virtue*: the love of beauty for beauty in itself. The *primary* ground of *primary* beauty is located in God's very being, and it is this beauty which is radiated through the mind or consciousness of God to the created world by the Spirit. Creation is situated in the midst of God's communication and expression of the effulgent beauty of the divine life, the beauty that is constitutive of the divine being itself. It is in this paradigm that the internal logic of the "Two Dissertations" coheres, in which virtue is grounded in the constructive vision of the creation of the world for the sake of God's beauty, and it is to God's beauty that humanity is drawn in the act and process of redemption.

■ In the End is Beauty: The Beauty of Redemption in Edwards and Maximus

The aesthetic theological vision of both Edwards and Maximus pivots on the central axis of the redemption of the world by God in Jesus Christ, as the consummate expression of God's true grace and beauty. In the incarnate descent of Jesus Christ, as the true *ikon* of God and the true representative of humanity, the evanescent creation is lifted up out of the mire of privation and finitude and given the gift of life and participation in the divine through Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection. In the words of Karl Barth, the descent of the Son of the God is the ascent of faraway humanity.⁹³ Edwards's and Maximus's aesthetic vision of the beauty of God is ineluctably bound to this central doctrine, and their aesthetic vision structures their understanding of the incarnation as the event *qua* event, defining and revealing God's ultimate beauty. The aesthetic design of their theological systems leads to this as the apex of God's beauty and glory communicated to the world, and it is from and to that beauty which redemption proceeds.

are is determined by God's positioning and the natural limit of their logoi that God inscribes in them, and when they are is determined from their beginning. . . . Anyone who is convinced that God exercises providence over the things that are, from which he has learnt that he exists, will judge it right and reasonable that he is none other than the guardian of the things that are and cares for them and that he alone is the fashioner of what is. For the permanence of what is, and its order and position and movement, and the consonance of the extremities with the middle, the agreement of the parts with the wholes, and the union throughout of the wholes with the parts, and the unblurred distinction of the parts one from another in accordance with the individuating difference of each, and the unconfessed union in accordance with the indistinguishable sameness in the wholes, and the combination and distinction of everything with everything else, and the eternally preserved succession of everything and each one according to form, so that the logos of each nature is not corrupted by confusion or blurring, all this shows clearly that everything is held together by the providence of the Creator God" (Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 10, PG 91:1181B–C, 1188D–1189B).

⁹³ Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (ed. and trans. T. F. Torrance and G. W. Bromiley; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960–1962) IV/1:§59, IV/2:§64.

In Edwards and Maximus, the aesthetic shape of redemption is the replicative motif of descent and ascent, in which God deigns to become human through the *assumptio carnis* of the Logos, of the divine Son; as God becomes human, in the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity, without abridgment, truncation or alloy on either side, Jesus Christ takes upon himself the aberrancy of the human condition, and inters its ephemerality in his crucified flesh. The axiomatic metaphor in this theological conceit is that of the “happy exchange” (*admirabile commercium*), in which the Son gives himself over in place of the fallen human, and in fact exchanges the human condition for his own, such that he not only pays the penalty in an atoning transaction, but gives and communicates to humanity his own being and righteousness as the amelioration of her moribund condition. In the descent, the Son exchanges places with the perishing human, giving his own flesh and life on behalf of hers, and in this contraposition the human is raised into transelemented (*metastoeicheiosis*) life. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, in turn, seals humanity into the life of the triune God and establishes her in the path of ascendance to the community of the Trinity.

At the root, the aesthetics of redemption in the systems of Edwards and Maximus are concerned with redressing the problem of human fallenness. Maximus constructed an ontology of the human fall, according to which “Adam’s free choice corrupted along with it our human nature,”⁹⁴ introducing a privation into human nature that endures through Adam’s posterity. This theological rendering provided an alternative to the Origenist construct, which presumed a pre-existent descent of souls from the static presence of God, as a punitive consequence of which creation emerged. Maximus trenchantly opposed this strand of Origenism, as it assumed that souls in the beauteous presence of God could somehow become instable and “slip” out of God’s presence. He contended, rather, that movement cannot precede being and that, further, the instability of creaturehood proceeds directly from the illogical decision of Adam, which inscribed sin and death into the ontological fabric of human identity. Edwards, likewise, confronted the controversial question of “original sin,” taking up the received traditional doctrine against the disputation of Arminian theologians and rationalist philosophy.⁹⁵ Edwards aligned himself with the traditional Augustinian and Calvinist position on original sin, which was fully extant in the Puritan and Post-Reformation scholastic theology of the time. For Edwards, humanity inherited a corruption of the interior composition of the human faculties, a depraved nature of heart, mind, will and body.⁹⁶ The relevance of this to our analysis of the aesthetics of redemption is that humanity in her very being, and as a whole, became so corrupted by the act of Adam as to necessitate divine intervention to recoup the enervated creation.

⁹⁴ Max. Conf., *Ad. Thal.* 42, in CCSG 7:285.

⁹⁵ For the historical background to this question, see Clyde Holbrook’s introduction to Edwards, *Original Sin*, in *Works* 3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.1.1–4.

The point of greatest overlap between Edwards and Maximus occurs in this *topos*—the rescue of creation in the extension of God’s own hand, now made of flesh, to take hold of drowning humanity, and to lift her up out of the dross and into ineluctable union in the life and light of the triune God. For Edwards and Maximus, the incarnation and the atoning death of Jesus Christ anchor the aesthetic dimension of redemption in the matrix of exchange within Christ’s person. They re-envision salvation in terms of “aesthetic ecstasy” in the renovation of human nature (and the created order) through the intimate union of Christ’s being with the world.⁹⁷ Maximus conceives of the incarnation as the consummate act of beauty, in which the Logos, who is the principle of all beauty,⁹⁸ joins the divine with the human: “God and humanity are joined together in a single embrace . . . [this is] the first and most excellent good, of which nothing more wonderful and beautiful can be conceived.”⁹⁹ Edwards, quite similarly, locates the principle of infinite excellency and beauty in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the aesthetic nature of beauty, harmony and union that flows from it.¹⁰⁰ In this design, for Maximus and Edwards, the Chalcedonian logic is extremely important, in that the soteriological nature of the incarnation is bound up in the undiminished nature of the divine and the human in Christ’s person, as our union with God is dependent on what is transacted in him.¹⁰¹ In fact, the excellency and the beauty of the incarnation itself stems from the Chalcedonian view, as for Edwards it is the distinguishing principle of God’s own excellency that God would undertake this very transaction under the constraints of human flesh.¹⁰² One may think of Gregory Nazianzen’s axiomatic statement, “that which was not assumed was not healed, but that which is united to the Godhead [in the hypostatic union] is saved;”¹⁰³ for Edwards, the incarnation is the “beautifying” of humanity by God’s intervening act of bringing humanity to God’s self.¹⁰⁴

The beauty of the incarnation, further, is in the movement of Christ’s act of atonement, in which the incarnation and the cross of Jesus Christ are held together in a symmetry and harmony of divine action. The atoning act of the cross is, for Edwards, the nadir of God’s descent to humanity:

⁹⁷ I have appropriated the phrase “aesthetic ecstasy” from Robert Jenson, *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 17. Jenson’s account of Edwards’s theological construction under the rubric of beauty and aesthetics acknowledges the Platonic motifs, but glosses over them rather hurriedly. Jenson suggests that one could appropriately classify Edwards as a Platonic or mystical theologian but provides little explanation for this assessment (15–34).

⁹⁸ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7.

⁹⁹ Max. Conf., *Ep.* 2.

¹⁰⁰ Edwards, “Essay on the Trinity,” *Works* 23:135–36.

¹⁰¹ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 5; *Opusc.* 7.

¹⁰² Edwards, “Misc. No. 741,” *Works* 18:368–69.

¹⁰³ Greg. Naz., *Ep.* 202; Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 5, 41.

¹⁰⁴ Edwards, “Essay on the Trinity,” *Works* 23:128, 131–38; “Treatise on Grace,” *ibid.*, 177–79; “Misc. no. 709,” *Works* 18:338–39.

None in the kingdom of heaven ever descended so low as Christ did, who descended as it were into the depths of hell. He suffered shame and wrath and was made a curse. He went lower in these things than ever any other did; and this he did as a servant not only to God but to men, that he undertook to serve us and minister to us in such dreadful drudgery while we sit at meat in quietness and rest, and partake of those dainties that he serves up to us. . . . God is pleased to put greater honor upon an inferior nature, viz. the human, by causing that the head of all, and the king of all creatures, should be in human nature, and the saints in that nature in Christ to be in many respects exalted above the angels.¹⁰⁵

This is the fundamental conceit of the “happy exchange:” that in God’s act of incarnate humiliation and atoning sacrifice, God took upon God’s self the penalty of human sin, an act of utter self-abnegation, and that God thereby exchanges the human state of wrath, sin and death for a state of glory, righteousness and union. The “happy exchange” places humanity in a position of indelible union with God through Jesus Christ; as Maximus writes, it is “the ineffable union” in which humanity is placed in partnership and familial relationship with God, such that our union is *harmonious* with the interpenetrative nature of Christ’s own hypostatic union.¹⁰⁶ The pivotal act of the atoning exchange on the cross opens the way for membership in God’s own trinitarian life; it is the route through which, as Edwards notes, humanity becomes inducted into the “glorious community” of God’s triune being.¹⁰⁷ The act of God in the incarnation and the cross is one of extirpation, of removing the errant principle of privation and of stamping out finitude and death, in order to give the gift of a new ontology to humanity, an ontology that is identical to God—not that human beings become in essence (*ousia*) the same as God, but that God, in a sense, becomes their own being. This is the goal, the *telos*, of redemption.¹⁰⁸

The conceit of this ontological union is theosis or divinization, which means principally a union in being with God. Maximus conceives of this as the drawing of humanity into union with God, which changes the essence of human beings in transfixion or transelementation in the ultimate beauty and glory of God. Yet, this concept of theosis does not posit a *blending* of God and humanity into each other, where all differentiation is lost. Rather, human beings are moved into a

¹⁰⁵ Edwards, “Misc. no. 681,” *Works* 18:241.

¹⁰⁶ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 5.

¹⁰⁷ Edwards, “End of Creation,” *Works* 8:431–36, 519–21; 526–37. Compare Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 71; *Opusc.* 2, 3.

¹⁰⁸ This trajectory in Edwards’s thought can be observed clearly as early as his delivery of the “Thursday Lecture” to the Boston public in 1731, published under the title “God Glorified in the Work of Redemption and the Greatness of? Man’s Dependence.” Here, Edwards establishes the ultimate transformation of the human being through the soteriological imputation of the grace of Christ, in which there is a genuine “communication of God’s excellency and holiness,” by which “man is *made* excellent and holy by being made partakers of God’s holiness.” This is the meaning of “theosis” or “deification” in the discussion below. See McClymond, “Edwards, Palamas, and neoplatonism,” in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, 144–53.

participation in God through “beholding the ultimate and ineffable beauty, which transfixes our nature as with a stamp by which we are impressed into conformity and perfection with God’s image. We will participate without being restricted, being uncontainably contained [in God]. It is genuine harmony with the fullness of God who will infuse us and unite us to God’s being.”¹⁰⁹ Edwards seems to ascribe to this understanding of theosis as the ultimate goal of union with God’s being and the perfection of communion in God’s glory. Edwards draws this understanding pointedly from the event of the incarnation itself:

Christ will conform his people to himself: he’ll give them his glory, the glory of his person; their souls shall be made like his soul, their bodies like to his glorious body; they shall partake with him in his riches, as co-heirs in his pleasures. . . . Hereby we are brought to an immensely more glorious and exalted kind of union with God and enjoyment of him, both the Father and the Son, than otherwise could have been. For *Christ being united to the human nature, we have advantage for a far more intimate union and conversation with him*, than we could possibly have had if he had remained only in the divine nature. So we have been united to a divine person, can in him have more intimate union and conversation with God the Father, who is only in the divine nature, than otherwise possibly could be. Christ, who is a divine person, by taking on him our nature, descends from the infinite distance between God and us, and is brought nigh to us, to give us advantage to converse with him. So on the other hand, we, by being in Christ, a divine person, ascend nearer to God the Father, and have advantage to converse with him. This was the design of Christ to bring it to pass, that he and his Father and his people might be brought to a most intimate union and communion.¹¹⁰

This is the fundamental realization and fulfillment of the thesis Edwards established in his dissertation “End of Creation,” according to which the incarnation is a *mimesis* of the emanation and remanation of the divine procession in creation; the apex of all things resides in the beatific vision of God and the unrestricted participation of the creature in God, which, for Edwards, “will be an act of love in God” in which humanity will “enjoy God as partaking with Christ of his enjoyment of God, for they are united with him and are glorified and made happy in the enjoyment of God as his members.”¹¹¹ According to Edwards, humanity is given the gift of participating

¹⁰⁹ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7, PG 91:1076B, 1088B.

¹¹⁰ Edwards, “Misc. no. 571,” *Works* 18:108, 110. See also “God Glorified in the Work of Redemption,” in *Works of President Edwards*, 4:174–75.

¹¹¹ Edwards, “Sermon on Rom. 2.10,” in *Works* 8: 227–79; “End of Creation,” *Works of President Edwards* 8:531–37; “Misc. no. 678;” “Christ the Spiritual Sun,” *Works* 22:50–63. In “Misc. no. 741,” Edwards writes: “This redemption leaves nothing to hinder out highest exaltation, and the utmost intimacy and fullness of enjoyment of God. . . . Christ was made flesh, and dwelt among us in a nature infinitely below his original nature, for this end, that we might have as it were the full possession and enjoyment of him. . . . These things imply not only that the saints shall have such an intimate enjoyment of the Son [Edwards here again repeats “ye shall be gods”], but that they, through the Son, shall have a most intimate enjoyment of the Father. Which may be argued from

in God and is made to share in the glory and happiness of the divine “community.” Further, Edwards shows that there is a progressive principle of union at work, in which on account of Christ’s union with us in the incarnation, and on account of his atoning exchange for us, our union with God is not only possible but begins now in this life, and leads into an ever increasing state of intimate perfection, glory and enjoyment in God.¹¹² God, in Jesus Christ, has given to humanity the ability and the *telos* to experience, know and enjoy God in God’s infinite beauty and glory by being made to participate and to become a part of God’s eternal and beatific being-in-community.

The logic of this argument of Edwards’s is that as God has extended God’s very being to us in the incarnation, and as God has even taken upon God’s self the transaction for human sin in the cross, God will not withhold from humanity anything, even God’s own being, such that humanity will be brought *in* to the infinite being of God to be made one in and with God.¹¹³ This theotic design of redemption is nothing less, for Edwards, than a movement of true beauty and grace, as the design of God’s redemption reveals the beauty and symmetry of God’s being in that Christ descends to the lowest point of our nature and takes on our punishment for the purpose of admitting humankind into the participation and attainment of “godhood.”¹¹⁴ The whole movement of descent-ascent bespeaks a beauty and proportion, in God’s descent to us and assumption of our nature in order that we should ascend and partake in God, and even more in the “happy exchange” of Christ’s atonement, whereby he took on the penalty of our sin in exchange for his own righteousness. The beauty of redemption is that God takes on flesh to “beautify”

this, that the way that God hath contrived to bring them to their happiness, is to unite them to the Son as members: which doubtless is that they may partake with the head that they are so united to in his good” (*Works* 18:366–68).

¹¹² Edwards, “Misc. no. 777,” *Works* 18:430; “End of Creation,” *Works* 8:520–25. In “Misc. 571” Edwards states: “The union is but begun in the world, and there is a great deal that remains in this world to separate and disunite them; but then all those obstacles of a close union and most intimate communion shall be removed” (*Works* 18:109).

¹¹³ Edwards notes in “Misc. No. 571”: “Christ has brought it to pass, that those that the Father has given him should be brought into the household of God, that he and his Father and they should be brought into the household of God, that he and his Father and they should be as it were one society, one family; that his people should be in a sort admitted into that society of the three persons in the Godhead . . . hence we see how God has confounded Satan, in actually fulfilling that which was a lie in him, wherewith he deluded poor man and procured his fall, viz. *that they should be as gods*” (*Works* 18:110–11). Even more colorful is the statement by Edwards in “Misc. no. 741”: “He whose arms were expanded to suffer, to be nailed to the cross, will doubtless be opened as wide to embrace those for whom he suffered. He whose side, whose vitals, whose heart, was opened to the spear of his enemies to give access to their malice and cruelty, and to let out his blood, will doubtless be opened to admit the love of his saints” (370). . . . “[T]here will be no happiness too much for them. God won’t begrudge anything as too good for them. There will be no restraint to his love, no restraint to their enjoyment of himself; nothing will be too full, too inward and intimate for them to be admitted to” (372).

¹¹⁴ Edwards, “Misc. no. 741,” *ibid.*, 369. Edwards in this entry repeats the statement “they shall be gods.” See also Edwards, “End of Creation,” *Works* 8:519–21, 533–36.

humanity in the image and likeness of God's own *ikon*—who is the true idea and principle of God's own beauty—so that humanity is uplifted in effervescent glory to behold and be united in communion with God.

This is the brilliance of divine grace, for Edwards, and it brings into view the internal coherence of Edwards's conception of conversion. The aesthetic design of redemption underwrites the movement of human conversion through the communication of this beautiful transaction and exchange to the human mind and heart through the Spirit. This is the true nature of the assertion Edwards makes in *Religious Affections* that the Spirit infuses the human being with a *sense* and *taste* of the divine sweetness, such that the "peculiar work of the Holy Spirit is to communicate himself, and *make the creature partaker of the divine nature*," inculcating true spiritual affections that align with the joy and beauty of God's nature.¹¹⁵ The Spirit, in fact, for Edwards, enacts and communicates the beauty and holiness of God to the creature and seals in the creature the transaction of God's grace in Jesus Christ, effectively creating in humanity a new ontology of holiness in grace.¹¹⁶ The beauty of God laid out in the redemption enacted in Jesus Christ is in the interior content of the witness of the Spirit; this is the "divine and supernatural light" of the Holy Spirit, who creates an inward sense in the heart of a "new, supernatural principle of life and action . . . given immediately by God [in which] spiritual and saving conviction of the truth and reality" of "divine excellency of thing revealed in the Word of God is impressed" with the result that "its fruit [is] an universal holiness."¹¹⁷ The Spirit is here the *donum* of the beauty of God in

¹¹⁵ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *Works* 2:180–81 [italics mine]. Compare Max. Conf. *Ambig.* 42, where Maximus discusses the communication of the principle [logos] of God's beauty to the human mind through "the grace of the Spirit."

¹¹⁶ Edwards, *Religious Affections*; idem., *A Divine and Supernatural Light*, *Works* 17: 400–2. In Misc. no. 537, Edwards writes: "There is no gift or benefit that is so much in God, that is so much of himself, of his nature, that is so much of a communication of the Deity, as grace is; 'tis as much a communication of the Deity, as light is a communication of the sun. . . . God's creatures, the sun, moon and stars, etc., are his own; but with more eminent reason, that which is so nearly pertaining to the very nature of God, as his grace, the actings and influences of his own Spirit, the communications of his own beauty and his own happiness, God will therefore make his sovereign right there more eminently to appear, in the bestowment of this." *Works* 18:82–83. Compare Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 42; *Centuries on Love*, 6, 7.

¹¹⁷ Edwards, *A Divine and Supernatural Light* in *Works* 17:410–13, 423–24. Edwards writes in "Misc. no. 782: "Saving conviction of divine truth does most essentially arise from the spiritual sense of the excellency of divine things. Yet this sense of spiritual excellency is not the only kind of ideal apprehension, or sense of divine things, that is concerned in such a conviction, but it also partly depends on a sensible knowledge of what is natural in religion, as this may be needful to prepare the mind for a sense of its spiritual excellency, and as such a sense of its spiritual excellency may depend upon it. For as the spiritual excellency of the things of religion itself does depend on and presuppose those things that are natural in religion—they being as it were the substratum of this spiritual excellency—so a sense, or ideal apprehension, of the one, depends in some measure on the ideal apprehension of the other. Thus a sense of the excellency of God's mercy in forgiving sin, depends on a sense of the great guilt of sin, the great punishment it deserves. A sense of the beauty and wonderfulness of divine grace, does in great measure depend on a sense of the greatness

Christ, and is the operative principle activating the human mind to perceive and to know the excellent beauty of the redemption of the creature. The Spirit, in its movement, impresses the mind and the heart with this sense of beauty and holiness, thus creating a “shining” effect that draws humanity to God in a foretoken of the ineluctable union in God’s glory.¹¹⁸ This is the meaning of Edwards’s assertion in “The Mind” that God’s “love to the creature is . . . according as they partake of his excellence and beauty . . . [which] is according as he communicates more or less of his Holy Spirit.”¹¹⁹ The communicatory grace of God in the Spirit works to draw humanity towards the Godhead by revealing the beauty and excellency of God in God’s work in Jesus Christ on the way to bringing humanity into intimate unification with the divine Trinity in the resplendency of God’s glory.

I suggest that the reconceptualization of justification in Edwards turns upon the aesthetic dimension of redemption as outlined above.¹²⁰ Anri Morimoto ascribes a Catholic shape to the justification and grace in Edwards;¹²¹ George Hunsinger likewise perceives in Edwards’s theology a retreat from the doctrine of justification as defined in the Reformed tradition of Luther, Calvin, Turretin and Ames.¹²² Justification in Edwards allows for the provision of reward and merit in the works of redeemed human beings, according to Hunsinger, through a notion of “congruent

and majesty of that being whose grace it is, and so indeed a sense of the glory of God’s holiness and all his moral perfections. A sense of the excellency of Christ’s salvation, depends on a sense of the misery and great guilt of those that are the subjects of this salvation. And so, though a saving conviction of the truth of the things of religion does most directly and immediately depend on a sense of their spiritual excellency, yet it also in some measure, and more indirectly and remotely, depends on an ideal apprehension of what is natural in religion. . . . [Human beings are] given a sense of Christ’s divine excellency, and so of the glorious dignity of his person, and what he did and suffered for sinners; hereby their eyes are opened to see the perfect fitness . . . this excellent congruity which powerfully convinces them of the truth of the gospel . . . which they now see to be so congruous . . . it is a divine contrivance, and that there is acceptance to be had with God in this. . . . The sight of this congruity convinces the more strongly [of] the excellent wisdom, holiness and justice of God’s beautiful design” (18:465–66).

¹¹⁸ Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *Works* 23:188–91, 194–99.; see note 84 for Maximus.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, “The Mind,” *Works* 6:364.

¹²⁰ Due to the scope of this essay, I will only offer preliminary remarks here as a way of tying up this presentation. A full length essay dedicated to this particular issue is forthcoming.

¹²¹ Anri Morimoto, *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995) 41–69.

¹²² George Hunsinger, “Dispositional Soteriology: Jonathan Edwards on Justification by Faith Alone,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 66 (2004) 107–20. It should be noted that Hunsinger does not suggest that Edwards takes up a Catholic position, but only that Edwards’s technical treatment in the treatise involves a “softening” of focus in opening up the “double ground” of justification in the forensic aspect of Christ and the works of human beings. Hunsinger’s analysis is rigorous and dense, and as his student it is with utmost respect that I acknowledge my indebtedness to his analysis. However, my argument here is that the aesthetic dimension in Edwards’s thought adds further complexity to his work. An early analysis of Edwards’s innovation of thought on justification is the study of Thomas Schafer, “Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith,” *Church History* 20 (1951) 55–67.

merit.”¹²³ It seems, at a glance, that Edwards follows a more Thomistic approach to the doctrine of justification by faith; yet I would argue that justification by faith in Edwards is most fundamentally an aesthetic turn *within* a Reformed frame. First, justification is construed by Edwards to be grounded primarily in Jesus Christ and his acts of incarnation and atonement. Edwards clearly works, in this regard, within the Reformed tradition. Second, justification proceeds, for Edwards, from the forensic grounds of Christ’s positive and negative righteousness to the imputation of Christ’s righteousness in the human being (viz., the effect of the happy exchange). Third, justification by faith is the ground of all human works of obedience, and the fruits of their “heavenly purchase,” such that they reprise the obedience of Christ always already performed for them—they are mimetic acts originating from their source in Christ.¹²⁴ It is in the next step that Edwards takes his most radical turn in his account of justification, and re-circuits the Reformed understanding through the appropriation and application of aesthetic categories.

For Edwards, faith itself and the works that are the products of justification are qualities of “fitness and beauty” congruous with the beauty and merit of Christ himself, and God looks upon human beings as “fitting” for reception of these qualities.¹²⁵ Justification as an eternal reward takes on an aspect of double agency in that good works and holiness derive from the imputation of Christ’s merit to humans, and human works in alignment with this are received by God in a sense of excellency and beauty that belongs to both creature and Jesus Christ, such that the two become united under the primary beauty of God in Jesus Christ extended to the creature.¹²⁶ Under this extension of God’s beauty in Christ, and the imputation of the merits of excellency and beauty through Christ, such that the communication of Christ to the creatures is the causal ground of their own works, Edwards can say:

I say, the believer’s holiness, viewed in these circumstances, is looked upon as a beauty and excellency having in it a great moral value in the sight of God, recommending to great favor and complacency and infinite rewards, and is a secondary recommendation to and worthiness of that eternal life and happiness which Christ has promised to bestow on believers in heaven.¹²⁷

¹²³ Ibid., 108. Edwards writes: “If we take works as acts or expressions of faith, they are not excluded; so a man is not justified by faith only, but also by works, i.e., he is not justified only by faith as a principle in the heart, or in its first and more immanent acts, but also by the effective acts of it in life, which are the expressions of the life of faith” (*Works* 19:236).

¹²⁴ Edwards, “Misc. No. 27b,” *Works* 13:214.

¹²⁵ Edwards, “Justification by Faith,” *Works* 19:154–56.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 213–15, 236.

¹²⁷ Edwards, “Controversies’ Notebook: Justification,” *Works* 23:367. Edwards also states in “Misc. no. 793”: “Believers may be heirs of eternal life prior to their good works. They may have a right by Christ’s righteousness received by faith that may be prior to any regard to anything in them as a good work, or any virtue or lovely qualification in them; and yet it may be the pleasure of God to bestow heaven upon them in that way, viz. in reward for their good works, as lovely to God in Christ. . . . So believers being heirs as children (which they are by the righteousness of

Justification and participation in God are fully consonant with the beauty and excellency of Christ's being, which, when imputed to the human, reacts in the quality of "aesthetic ecstasy" to produce beauty and excellency in the human creature, and falls out to the bestowal of reward and positive regard to the creature in symmetrical alignment with Christ.¹²⁸ As Edwards argues in *Nature of True Virtue*, the fundamental quality of virtue is the regard for or consent to being, particularly by the divine being, and here we can see that in justification God has consent to God's own being by perceiving God's being in the being of the creature through the imputation of Christ's merit and excellency to the creature, so that the works of the creature, in consonance with the creature's being as being united to Christ, are constituent of the being of the creature and symmetrically related to the being and works of Christ; the upshot is that God fills the office of virtue by declaring the creature righteous and justified in consequence of the creature's works *as those works are grounded in Christ and Christ's beauty and excellence*.¹²⁹ Edwards, here, does not impose a catholicity onto justification in the vein of Aquinas; rather, I suggest, he comes much closer to the view of Maximus and the Eastern tradition. The closeness of justification to the telos of theosis¹³⁰ in Edwards echoes the Eastern tradition. Maximus exemplifies this tradition:

The fullness of God permeates them [viz., the Spirit] wholly as the soul permeates the body, and they become, so to speak, limbs of a body, well adapted and useful to the master. He directs them as he sees best, filling them with his own glory and blessedness, and bestows on them unending life beyond imagination and wholly free from the signs of corruption that mark the present age. Through the transferal of Christ, he gives them life, not the life that comes from breathing air, not that of veins coursing with blood, but the life that comes from being wholly infused with the fullness of God . . . hence the whole man, as the object of divine action, is divinized by being God by the grace of God who became man.¹³¹

Thus, the whole movement of redemption, from beginning to end, is the beauty of God's grace and the grace of God's beauty, which rescues perishing human creatures; the entirety of redemption is located in the ground of God's glorious

Christ) is the reason that God appoints them to obtain heaven in a way of good works, which God has before ordained that they should walk in them" (18:493).

¹²⁸ Edwards, "Treatise on Grace," 23:175; "Controversies' Notebook: Justification," 23:359.

¹²⁹ Edwards, "Justification by Faith," 19:155–59, 211–13, 216.

¹³⁰ This is most aptly demonstrated by the entry of Edwards on justification (Misc. No. 893): "On account [of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to believers] this shows the exceeding happiness of the saints in glory. . . . The saints are glorified in reward of the righteousness of God. Therefore the saints shall be brought nearer to God, and to vastly higher degrees of union with him, and more excellent enjoyment of his love, even to a participation of the Father's love to the Son" (20:153).

¹³¹ Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 7, PG 91:1088B–C.

being, which raises up creation to be utterly united in unending participation and union in the radiant presence and being of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹³²

■ Conclusion

The core argument of this essay has been that Jonathan Edwards reconceptualized the dogmatic loci of Christian theology through an aesthetic lens, and that as a result his theological vision takes on a remarkable resemblance to the Eastern tradition, most closely resembling the thought of Maximus the Confessor. It cannot be suggested that Edwards in fact read Maximus, let alone that he consciously appropriated the vision of Maximus into his own thinking. A more probable explanation for their resemblance is the unique parallel between the historical milieus in which Maximus and Edwards resided. The resurgence of Platonic philosophy in Cambridge, the epistemological and moral philosophy of Locke,¹³³

¹³² Edwards, "End of Creation," 8:530–36.; Note "Misc. no. 957": "The eternal heaven is nothing so but the divine nature itself. The only heaven that is unalterable is the state of God's own infinite and unchangeable glory . . . the eternal abode of the blessed Trinity, and of the happiness and glory they have in one another. . . . The Son being thus glorified with infinite sweetness by the light of the countenance of the Father, the glory will be communicated from him to his bride, and she shall be transformed into his image by beholding him, or by his sweet shining and smiling upon her. . . . The beams of the Son's new glory of grace and love shall advance the whole world to new glory and sweetness. Thus Christ and his saints both shall receive their consummate felicity and full rewards, and shall begin the eternal feast of love, the eternal embraces" (23:214–15; compare Max. Conf., *Ambig.* 42). One important question that I have left unaddressed is the extent of redemption. On the one hand, Edwards clearly follows in the Augustinian and Calvinist tradition in his doctrine of election, and quite trenchantly articulates a notion of eternal punishment. On the other hand, the logic of his essay "End of Creation" and the implications of his theological aesthetics raise the possibility of a proto-universalism. Michael McClymond has made note of this particular implication in "End of Creation" in *Encounters with God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 62–63; see also Gerald McDermott, "Jonathan Edwards, John Henry Newman and non-Christian Religions," in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, 127–38. See also McDermott's masterful *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 110–48. Additionally, John Wilson calls attention to the tendency toward universalism underlying Edwards's argument in his unfinished work "History of Redemption" (see *Works* 9:69). Wilson argues that a "tacit" universalism runs through Edwards's writings on redemption, without becoming overt or explicit. Interestingly, this accords with the nature of *apokatastasis* (the return of all things) in Maximus, which is an Eastern doctrine of universalism; Maximus is never explicit in his treatment of redemption, but there is an intonation that closely aligns with this doctrine. See Brian Daley, "Apokatastasis and Honorable Silence in the Eschatology of Maximus the Confessor," *Paradosis* 27 (1980) 309–39.

¹³³ See Fiering, *Edwards' Moral Thought*, 14, 22–23, 30, 35–40. See also Holmes, "Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology?" in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, 99–103. Additionally, see William J. Wainwright, "Jonathan Edwards and the Language of God," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 48 (1980) 519–30.

Berkeley,¹³⁴ Shaftesbury,¹³⁵ Malebranche,¹³⁶ and Hutcheson,¹³⁷ the Cambridge Spiritual Brethren, and the writings of John Cotton were all at Edwards's disposal, and he brought them into a unique synthesis that bore striking neoplatonic and Eastern features. If Knight's proposal is correct,¹³⁸ the Spiritual Brethren and certainly Cotton had imbibed the Eastern patristics and the Platonic models appropriated by the Cambridge philosophers who make appearances throughout Edwards's notebooks. I am suggesting that a philosophical and theological line of thinking that can be traced back to Cappadocian and Eastern tradition had surfaced in Edwards's time, and that it infused the variegated sources of Edwards's thinking. Moreover, the state of theological controversy sparked similar types of theological defense and substantiation: as Maximus faced Origenism, Arianism, monophysitism, Macedonianism—controversies surrounding the definition of the person of Christ, the Trinity, creation—so also Edwards entered the dispute over Socinianism, Arminianism, the Trinity, the will, and original sin. In a strange way, these two consummate theologians, though separated by over a millennium, constructed astoundingly similar bodies of theological contemplation that pivoted on the axis of God's glory and beauty.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 15, 51, 65–66. See also Elwood, *Philosophical Theology*, 169.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 7, 15, 23, 64–65, 108. See also Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 26, 196.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 40–44, 51–52, 93–94, 341–45. See also Oliver Crisp, "How Occasional was Edwards' Occasionalism?" in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, 65–66; and, Elwood, *Philosophical Theology*, 171. A good overview on this source of influence upon Edwards's thought is located in Mason I. Lowance, "Jonathan Edwards and the Platonists: Edwardsean Epistemology and the Influence of Malebranche and Norris," in *Studies in Puritan American Spirituality* 2 (1992) 129–51.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 7, 9–10, 136–37, 144–46, 256–57. See also Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 23, 194–96.

¹³⁸ See nn. 5–7.

Introducing an Arabic Commentary on the Apocalypse: Ibn Kātib Qayṣar on Revelation^{*}

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Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's long-neglected *Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* is a veritable treasure trove for those interested not only in the early transmission of the biblical text and its history of interpretation, but also in the way ancient definitions of prophecy and vision were reconceived in Arabic Christian theology. Written in Cairo by a thirteenth-century Egyptian author, it is one of only two large-scale medieval commentaries on Revelation produced in the Arabic language. The other such commentary was composed by a fellow Copt, Būlus al-Būshī, who was a near contemporary of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar. Together, these two works provide a compelling witness to the currency of this apocalyptic biblical text among Christians living in Islamic Egypt.

In the first part of this article I shall provide a brief introduction to both of these Copto-Arabic authors, situating them within the history of eastern Christian commentary on the Apocalypse and supplying essential background on their life and writings, with special attention given to the apologetic context of their work. The second part—the heart of my study—will focus specifically on the way

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that Ibn Kātib Qayṣar frames his interpretation of John's vision in the opening paragraphs of his commentary. In his interpretation of Revelation 1:1, the author presents a hierarchical classification of revelatory visions and portrays John as an angel, apostle, prophet, and priest. As I shall demonstrate, these two sets of concerns reveal how Ibn Kātib Qayṣar elaborates on ancient Greek and Latin cultural assumptions—assumptions that were crucially mediated through Arabic channels—even as he engaged with subtle linguistic issues specific to his use of a Copto-Arabic biblical text. Finally, in the third and concluding part of this article, I shall raise some questions regarding how Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's work was contextualized by, and in conversation with, early medieval Islamic theories of visionary experience.

■ Arabic Commentaries on the Apocalypse of John in Historical and Cultural Context

The Apocalypse of John had a somewhat inconsistent history of reception among early Christian churches in the eastern Mediterranean region¹—a fact confirmed by evidence related to both canonization and formal commentary. In the third century, Dionysius of Alexandria felt it necessary to allegorize the book of Revelation in order to defend its “concealed and more wonderful meaning” over against Christian detractors who rejected the work, even as he admitted the validity of critical arguments against its apostolic authorship.² In compiling an official list of canonical books, the fourth-century historian Eusebius of Caesarea showed some reservation about whether to include the Apocalypse, listing it alternatively under three separate categories: genuine, dubious, and spurious.³ Evidence from the second half of the fourth century suggests that the book of Revelation had fallen out of favor in some regions. In Asia Minor (ca. 380), Gregory of Nazianzus omits it from his list of canonical writings,⁴ and Amphilochius of Iconium harbors serious reservations, reporting that “most say it is spurious.”⁵ In Palestine and Syria during the same period, John's Apocalypse is omitted from the canon lists compiled by Cyril of

¹ Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., “Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List,” *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973) 1–41, esp. 21–26; Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 209–28.

² Dionysius of Alexandria, *On Promises*, preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.25.4. On Dionysius's allegorical interpretation of Revelation as a counter to more literal, so-called “bodily” readings of the text, see Stephen J. Davis, “Biblical Interpretation and Alexandrian Episcopal Authority in the Early Christian Fayoum,” in *Christianity and Monasticism in the Fayoum Oasis* (ed. Gawdat Gabra; Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2005) 45–61.

³ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 3.25.1–5.

⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1.1.12.39; Sundberg, “Canon Muratori,” 23.

⁵ Amphilochius of Iconium, *Iambi ad Seleucum* 316–18; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 212–13.

Jerusalem (ca. 350) and the *Apostolic Constitutions* (ca. 380), as well as from the Syriac *Peshitta* (ca. 400).⁶

This less-than-enthusiastic reception of the book among eastern Christians is also reflected in a fairly sparse commentary record. In comparison, numerous commentaries on Revelation were produced in the West. In the third century, Hippolytus of Rome completed his major treatise *On the Apocalypse* (which unfortunately does not survive apart from selected quotations from later authors).⁷ He was followed in the West by a series of Latin writers, including Victorinus of Pettau (late-third century),⁸ Tyconius (ca. 380),⁹ Primasius of Hadrumentum (ca. 550),¹⁰ Apringius of Beja (Portugal, ca. 550),¹¹ Bede (early-eighth century),¹² and at least nine other commentators before the end of the twelfth century.¹³ By contrast, in the Greek-speaking East, Origen's *Scholia on the Apocalypse*, if authentic,¹⁴

⁶ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses illuminandorum* 4.36; *Constitutiones apostolorum* 7.47.85. On the absence of the Apocalypse of John in the *Peshitta*, see Sundberg, "Canon Muratori," 24–25. In contrast to the Syriac *Peshitta*, the Ethiopian (Ge'ez) version of the Bible includes the book of Revelation; see Josef Hofmann, *Die äthiopische Übersetzung der Johannes-Apokalypse* (2 vols.; CSCO 281–282; Aethiopici 55–56; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1967); idem, *Die äthiopische Johannes-Apokalypse, kritisch untersucht* (CSCO 297; Subsidia 33; Louvain, Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1969).

⁷ Pierre Prigent and Ralph Stehly, eds., "Les fragments du *De Apocalypsi d' Hippolyte*," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 29 (1973) 313–33.

⁸ Martine Dulaey, ed., *Sur l'Apocalypse: suivi du fragment chronologique et de la construction du monde* (SC 423; Paris: Cerf, 1997).

⁹ William S. Babcock, ed., *Tyconius: The Book of Rules* (Texts and Translations 39; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1989); see also Francesco Lo Bue, *Turin Fragments of Tyconius' Commentary on Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); and Pamela Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: Its Purpose and Inner Logic* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

¹⁰ Arthur W. Adams, ed., *Commentarium libri quinque in Apocalypsim Joannis Evangelistae* (CSEL 92; Turnhout: Brepols, 1985).

¹¹ Roger Gryson, ed., *Commentaria minora in Apocalypsin Johannis: Variorum auctorum* (CCSL 107; Turnhout: Brepols, 2003) 33–97.

¹² Gryson, ed., *Bedae presbyteri expositio apocalypseos* (CCSL 121a; Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

¹³ This list of early medieval commentators includes the late-eighth-century writers Beatus of Liébana, Ambrosius Autpertus, and (Ps.-) Alcuin of York; the ninth- and tenth-century writers Haimo of Auxerre, and Adso; and the twelfth-century writers Bruno of Segi, Rupert of Deutz, Richard of St. Victor, and Joachim of Fiore. On the reception and interpretation of Revelation in the early and medieval Latin West, see Georg Kretschmar, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes: Die Geschichte ihrer Auslegung im 1. Jahrtausend* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1985) 116–60. On the relation of Christian iconography to this exegetical tradition, see Yves Christe, *L'Apocalypse de Jean: Sens et développements de ses visions synthétiques* (Paris: Picard, 1996) 53–193.

¹⁴ Constantin I. Dyobouniotes and Adolf von Harnack, eds., *Der Scholien-Kommentar des Origenes zur Apokalypse Johannis* (Texte und Untersuchungen 38.3; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911) 21–44; C. H. Turner, "The Text of the Newly Discovered Scholia of Origen on the Apocalypse," *Journal of Theological Studies* 13 (1912) 386–97; idem, "Origen, Scholia in Apocalypsi," 25 (1923) 1 16. Dyobouniotes, one of the original editors, had doubts about the authenticity of these scholia, and these doubts have been sustained in more recent scholarship: see, e.g., Charles W.

would represent the only commentary on Revelation produced before the sixth century, and it was only a collection of scattered glosses on selected passages, not a comprehensive treatment of the text as a whole. In fact, only three full-length commentaries survive in Greek from late antiquity or the early medieval period. The earliest complete commentary in that language was written by a certain sixth-century writer named Oecumenius from Asia Minor.¹⁵ The second and third commentaries — written in the seventh and tenth centuries by Andreas and Arethas of Caesarea in Cappadocia — are both dependent on Oecumenius's work, and the third is in many respects merely a paraphrastic expansion of the second.¹⁶ Other Eastern Christian language groupings give the Apocalypse text even less attention: For example, no Apocalypse commentaries are recorded in the Coptic language, and only scattered excerpts from a twelfth-century commentary by Dionysius bar Salibi (Dionysius Syrus) survive in Syriac.¹⁷ Thus, the presence of two original Arabic commentaries on Revelation from the thirteenth century significantly expands our knowledge regarding the reception of this text in the Christian East during the Middle Ages.

Having sketched out the rather sparse landscape of eastern Christian commentary on John's Apocalypse, let me turn now specifically to the two Arabic authors who took up the task of interpreting this work. What do we know about them and their cultural context? Būlus al-Būshī and Ibn Kātib Qayṣar both participated in what has long been recognized as a "Golden Age" of Copto-Arabic literature — a theological renaissance that took hold of the Egyptian church during the thirteenth century. Būlus al-Būshī was a reform-minded church leader who was elected bishop of Old Cairo around 1250 C.E.¹⁸ He is also known as a prolific theological author.

Lowry, "Did Origen Style the Son a κτίσμα?" *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1938) 39–42; and Michał Wojciechowski, *Pseudo-Orygenes, Uwagi do Apokalipsy* (= *Pseudo-Origen, Scholia on the Apocalypse*) (Mała Biblioteka Ojców Kościoła 4, Wydawnictwo „M”; Kraków, 2005).

¹⁵ *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse* (ed. H. C. Hoskier; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1928) 29–50; for an English translation, see *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (trans. John N. Suggit; Fathers of the Church 112; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006) 19–203.

¹⁶ *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes* (ed. Josef Schmid; 2 vols.; Münchener theologische studien 1; Munich: Karl Zink, 1955) 1:1–268 (Andreas); 1:207–458 (Arethas).

¹⁷ *Dionysius bar Salibi In Apocalypsim, Actus et Epistulas Catholicas* (ed. Jaroslav Sedláček, ed.; CSCO 53; Scriptorum Syri 18; Louvain: Secrétariat CorpusSCO, 1909) 3–29 (Syriac text); *ibid.* (CSCO 60; Scriptorum Syri 20; Louvain: Secrétariat CorpusSCO, 1910) 1–22 (Latin translation); see also www.tertullian.org/fathers/dionysius_syrus_revelation_01.htm (cited October 16, 2007). On Dionysius's life and writings, including a discussion of his various works of biblical commentary, see also Stephen Desmond Ryan, *Dionysius Bar Salibi's Factual and Spiritual Commentary on Psalms 73–82* (Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 57; Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 2004) ch. 1–2; reviewed by Lucas Van Rompay, in *Hugoye* 8.1 (2005).

¹⁸ On Būlus al-Būshī's life, see Samir Khalil Samir, *Traité de Paul de Bûš sur l'unité et la trinité l'incarnation, et la vérité du Christianisme* (*Maqālah fī al-tathlīth w-al-tajassud wa-Ṣiḥḥat al-Masiḥiyah*) (Patrimoine Arabe Chrétien 4; Zouk Mikhaïl: al-Turath al 'Arabi al-Masihi, 1983) v–viii, 15–27; and Aziz S. Atiya, "Būlus al-Būshī," *Coptic Encyclopedia* 2:423–24.

In addition to his *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, he produced a series of eight homilies connected with major feast days,¹⁹ as well as a systematic theology in three parts (on the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Christian truth).²⁰ His *Commentary on the Apocalypse* was the first written in Arabic; fairly spare in its wording, it becomes slightly more expansive when the author expounds upon the text's relevance for christological doctrine—especially the Incarnation, one of his favorite themes.²¹ While this commentary has not yet been edited, Shawqī Talia of the Catholic University of America published an English translation of the work as part of his 1987 doctoral dissertation²² and now is working on a full critical edition.

In contrast to the figure of Būlus, we know relatively little about Ibn Kātib Qayṣar. Our knowledge of his biography is limited to the fact that he descended from a Copt who held a prominent position in the Islamic government under the Amīr 'Alam al-Dīn Qayṣar—hence, the meaning of his name, “Son of the Scribe of Qayṣar (Caesar).”²³ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar applied his own writing skills in the field of theology; his literary output included biblical commentaries and translations,²⁴ a theological treatise on confession, and an epitome of an apologetic dialogue written by the earlier Arabic Christian writer, Yaḥya Ibn 'Adī.²⁵ He was also renowned as a grammarian and philologist; one of his influential works was a Coptic grammar entitled *al-Tabṣira* (“Enlightenment”). A polyglot, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar had some familiarity with Greek, Syriac, and Hebrew, in addition to Arabic and Coptic. This linguistic training significantly shaped his approach to the *Apocalypse* of John.

¹⁹ An uncritical edition of Būlus al-Būshī's eight homilies was published by Manqariūs Awād Allah, in *Maqālāt al-Anbā Būlus al-Būshī* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-tujārīyah al-ḥadīthah, 1972). In the past decade, Arab scholars have produced critical editions of two of these sermons: 1) *Homily on the Annunciation* (“L'Homélie de l'Annonciation de Būlus al-Būshī,” ed. Nagi Edelby; *Parole de l'Orient* 22 [1997] 503–65); and 2) *Homily on Pentecost* (ed. Joseph Moris Faltas; *al-Rūḥ al-qudus: Maymar 'aīd al-'anṣarah lil-usuqf Būlus al-Būshī* [Cairo: Mu'assasat al-Qadīs Anṭūniyūs, 2006]).

²⁰ Samir, *Traité de Paul de Būš*, 129–258.

²¹ My analysis of Būlus al-Būshī's text is primarily based on Arabic MS Sbath 1014 (thirteenth century C.E.), one of the two earliest extant copies of this text (see Vat. ar. 459, dated 1294 C.E.). As a check on that text, I have also consulted Arabic MS Or. 1329 (1671 C.E.) in the British Library (formerly Brit. Mus. Ar. Suppl. 16). Where readings in the British Library manuscript differ significantly from the earlier Sbath version, I call attention to this fact in the footnotes. On Būlus al-Būshī's commentary and its textual record, see also Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (= *GCAL*) (4 vols.; Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1947) 2:358–59.

²² Shawqī Talia, “Bulus al-Bushi's Arabic Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John: An English Translation and Commentary” (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1987).

²³ His full name was Abū Ishāq 'Alam al-Ri'āsa Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Shaykh Abū al-Ṭanā Ibn al-Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dawla Abū al-Faḍā'il.

²⁴ In addition to his *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar also wrote commentaries on the Pauline and Catholic epistles (Graf, *GCAL* 2:384–86). According to al-Wajīh al-Qalyūbī, he also produced an Arabic translation of the Catholic epistles (Graf, *GCAL* 2:387).

²⁵ His treatise on confession and his epitome of Yaḥya Ibn 'Adī are no longer extant, but are referred to and quoted by a thirteenth-century contemporary of the author, Abū Ishāq Ibn al-'Assāl (Graf, *GCAL*, 2:386–87).

Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's commentary on Revelation dates to 1266/7,²⁶ perhaps only a decade or two later than the one authored by Būlus al-Būshī. The work survives in a small handful of manuscripts, including one at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris dated to the thirteenth century,²⁷ and another at the Coptic Patriarchal Library in Cairo dating to the year 1335 C.E., but copied from an earlier manuscript dated 1305 C.E.²⁸ In other words, the known manuscript tradition for this commentary brings us to within thirty or forty years of its original composition.

²⁶ For a discussion of date and authorship, a brief summary of the work's contents, and an annotated bibliography listing known manuscripts, editions, and relevant studies published up to the middle of the twentieth century, see Graf, *GCAL*, 2:380–84. Ibn Kātib Qayṣar provides evidence for the date of composition himself in his comments on Revelation 17:10, when he identifies his time of writing as “year 983 of Diocletian, year 1271 of the incarnation, and year 6772 of the world” (Georg Graf, “Die koptische Gelehrtenfamilie der Aulād al-‘Assāl und ihr Schrifttum,” *Orientalia*, n.s. 1 [1932] 51; Girgis [Jirjis] Filūthā’us ‘Awaḍ, “Introduction” [in Arabic], to *Tafsīr Sifr al-Ru’yā li-l-Qadīs Yūḥannā al-Lahūtī l-Ibn Kātib Qayṣar* [ed. al-Qummuṣ Armāniyūs Ḥabashī Shattā al-Birmāwī; Cairo, 1939; repr. Maktabat al-Maḥabbah, 1994] 22). However, a problem is caused by the fact that these dates given by Ibn Kātib Qayṣar actually stand in conflict with one another: “year 983 of Diocletian” is equivalent to year 1266/7 after Christ, while “year 1271 of the incarnation” would be year 987 according to the Coptic martyrological calendar reckoned from the beginning of Diocletian's reign. It is Graf's judgment (one with which I concur) that the date given first (983 A.M., = 1266/7 C.E.) is the more reliable, since it follows the common Coptic dating system used in Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's day.

²⁷ Par. ar. 67 (thirteenth century C.E.). This Paris manuscript, the original beginning of which is unfortunately lost, served as the basis for the first modern summary of the work, published by Heinrich Ewald, in *Abhandlungen zur orientalischen und biblischen Literatur* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1832) 1–11.

²⁸ Arabic MS Cairo 666 (= Copt. Patr. 243): published in Murqus Simaika, *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the Principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the Monasteries of Egypt* (2 vols.; Cairo: Government Press, 1942) 2:101 (call no. theol. 58). The first folio and some folia at the end of this manuscript were restored in 1612 C.E.

The Coptic Patriarchate collection also contains another manuscript of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's work, Arabic MS Cairo 608 (= Copt. Patr. 243), which dates to the nineteenth century but is copied from the same fourteenth century prototypes: see Simaika, *Catalogue*, 100–1 (call. no. theol. 57). A fourth copy of the commentary has been documented in Syria (Aleppo 54; Ibrāhīm Ḥarfūsh, “Die Bibliothek der Maroniten in Ḥaleb,” *Mashriq* 17 [1914] 96). This Aleppo manuscript has been mistakenly transmitted under the name of Ibn al-‘Assāl (Graf, “Die koptische Gelehrtenfamilie,” 50). In the case of the Paris manuscript, the original title and identification of the author were lost when the first three folia went missing. At some later date, these missing pages were replaced with new leaves, which contain two separate (and spurious) authorial attributions—one gives credit to Hippolytus of Rome and Būlus al-Būshī (f. 2a), the other to John Chrysostom (f. 2b); see Graf, “Die koptische Gelehrtenfamilie,” 49–50; idem, *GCAL* 2:384; and Ewald, *Abhandlungen*, 2.

The first (and oldest) Cairo manuscript mentioned above (Arabic MS Cairo 666) was the text published by al-Qummuṣ Armāniyūs Ḥabashī Shattā al-Birmāwī: *Tafsīr Sifr al-Ru’yā li-l-Qadīs Yūḥannā al-Lahūtī l-Ibn Kātib Qayṣar* (Cairo, 1939; repr. 1994) (henceforth, Birmāwī 1994), and it is on this edition that I base my own study. Unfortunately, I have not been able to check the reissue of his edition against the Cairo manuscript which he transcribed. In utilizing uncritical editions of Arabic Christian texts published in Egypt, one must always beware of changes (both intentional and unintentional) allowed in the process of republishing and reprinting those texts. One such example of intentional editorial “correction” occurs in chapter 18, section 88, of Ibn Kātib

Judging by the surviving evidence, one may safely conclude that Ibn Kātib Qayṣar never completed his commentary; his interpretation ends rather abruptly at Revelation 20:6. However, in one of the curiosities of the manuscript tradition, this lacuna has been filled by later enterprising scribes, who have supplemented Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's text with Būlus al-Būshī's more succinct commentary on the remaining chapters and verses (20:7–22:21).²⁹ The end result is a juxtaposition of two Arabic perspectives on the Apocalypse of John.

Four distinguishing features of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's commentary may be identified at the outset:

1) the author's special focus on the grammar and etymology of particular words and phrases, with special reference to Coptic, Greek, and Syriac precedents;

2) his fondness for systematic classification, such as when he categorizes different meanings of the words "vision" (1:1) and "Jewish" (2:9),³⁰ and different classes or races of human beings according to moral and ethnic types (3:4 and 13:1);³¹

3) his healthy regard for historical context; as, for example, in the case of his discussion of John's messages to the seven churches (2:1–3:22),³² and the reigns of kings and emperors from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, such as Antiochus Epiphanes, Tiberius, Nero, and Titus (17:10);³³

4) his citation of earlier commentators, including Hippolytus of Rome (whose interpretations he often rejects) and a spectrum of other medieval Arabic writers ranging from the Jewish philosopher Maimonides,³⁴ to Christian theologians from different theological communions in the Near East, including the Nestorians Abū al-Faraj 'Abdallah ibn al-Ṭayyib and Sabrīshu' Bishr ibn al-Sirrī, as well as other anti-Chalcedonians such as 'Īsā ibn Zur'a and his near contemporaries Buṭrus al-Sadamantī and Būlus al-Būshī.³⁵ The ecumenical scope of his citational practice

Qayṣar's commentary (on Revelation 17:10: Birmāwī 1994, 337), where a recent Egyptian editor has sought to reconcile the conflicting dates provided by the author by changing the Coptic year from 983 to 987, even while the original 1939 introduction published with the 1994 printing retains the authentic reference to 983 (Birmāwī 1994, 22; see also my discussion of dating above in note 26). Despite such hazards, it has been necessary for the time being to rely on the version of the text that is currently available and in print, and to confirm textual details in relation to other, earlier studies as much as possible. However, this situation underscores the need for a critical edition that would serve as a more definitive basis for future scholarly work.

²⁹ The end of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's commentary is found on page 402 of Birmāwī's edition; the appended section of Būlus al-Būshī's work follows on 403–24.

³⁰ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.1; 3.12 (Birmāwī 1994, 30–31, 57–58).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 4.15; 13.62 (Birmāwī 1994, 75, 261–62).

³² *Ibid.*, 2.11–4.17 (Birmāwī 1994, 52–95).

³³ *Ibid.*, 18.88 (Birmāwī 1994, 335–37).

³⁴ While Maimonides (1138–1204 C.E.) was born in Spain, he spent the latter half of his life in Fuṣṭāṭ (a district adjacent to Old Cairo), where he wrote most of his works.

³⁵ On Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's citations of these Arabic Christian authors, see Graf, *GCAL* 2:383. On the identity of Bishr ibn al-Sirrī, see Sebastian Brock, "A Neglected Witness to the East Syriac New Testament Commentary Tradition, Sinai Arabic ms 151," in *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir S. I. on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*

reflects the spirit of the Copto-Arabic “Golden Age,” a period during which Egyptian theologians came into deeper, more positive engagement with the theology produced by fellow Arabic Christians in Syria and Iraq as they sought to defend their beliefs over against the intellectual challenges raised by Islam.³⁶

The relevance of this apologetic context for the task of biblical interpretation—that is, the heightened sensitivities connected with Christian-Muslim encounter—becomes especially evident in the way that Ibn Kātib Qayṣar handles the number 666, the infamous mark of the beast in Revelation 13:18.³⁷ After citing Hippolytus, who had identified four historical personages whose names had letter values corresponding to 666, he goes on to mention the fact that his Arabic compatriot Būlus al-Būshī had more recently put forward a fifth name with this numerical value.³⁸ An examination of Būlus al-Būshī’s own *Commentary on the Apocalypse of John* demonstrates his particular preoccupation with this detail in the biblical text. After quoting Revelation 13:11–18—eight consecutive verses of the biblical text—he reserves his only commentary for the number 666. In succinct and unsparing terms, he writes, “If the letters are summed up—if each letter is counted according to its value and added together, and then all are totaled up—the name (of the beast) will be *Mametios* (ΜΑΜΕΤΙΟΣ)—‘Muhammad’ (*Muḥammad*).”³⁹

This numerical association of the beast with Muhammad and the coming of the Arabs to Egypt is attested in Coptic sources as early as the seventh century. Around the year 690, the chronicler John of Nikiu wrote,

And now many of the Egyptians who had been false Christians denied the holy orthodox faith and life-giving baptism, and embraced the religion of

(ed. R. Ebied and Herman Teule; Eastern Christian Studies 5; Leuven: Peeters, 2004) 205–15, esp. 213–15.

³⁶ For studies of Arabic Christian apologetics under early Islam, especially the literature produced in Syria and Iraq which later thirteenth-century Copto-Arabic theologians utilized in developing their own apologetic discourse, see Rachid Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes (750–1050)* (Beauchesne religions 15; Paris: Beauchesne, 1985); *Christian Arabic Apologetics During the Abbasid Period, 750–1258* (ed. Samir Khalil Samir and Jørgen S. Nielsen; Leiden: Brill, 1994); and the numerous articles written by Sidney H. Griffith, including those collected in *The Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic: Muslim-Christian Encounters in the Early Islamic Period* (Variorum Collected Studies Series; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); and his more recent, “Answering the Call of the Minaret: Christian Apologetics in the World of Islam,” in *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam* (ed. J. J. van Ginkel, H. L. Murre-van der Berg, Theo Martin van Lint; Leuven: Peeters, 2005) 91–126.

³⁷ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 13.64 (Birmāwī 1994, 373–75).

³⁸ Ibid. (Birmāwī 1994, 374).

³⁹ Sbath 1014, f. 77a. The scribe completes the sentence in the margin, where he writes the Coptic word ΜΑΜΕΤΙΟΣ along with its Arabic “translation,” *Muḥammad*. In the British Library manuscript, Or. 1329 (f. 41a), the entire phrase, “his name is *Mametios*” is written in Coptic as follows: ΜΑ ΜΕ Τ Ι Ο Σ ΠΕ ΠΕΦΡΑΝ. Immediately below, the scribe has assigned each letter in the name its numerical value: 40 + 1 + 40 + 5 + 300 + 10 + 70 + 200 (= 666).

Throughout the rest of this article, for the sake of consistency, I use the Anglicized name of Muhammad rather than the technical transliterated form, Muḥammad (with the Arabic letter ḥā’ indicated by means of a sublinear dot).

the Muslim, the enemies of God, and accepted the detestable doctrine of the beast, that is, Muhammad.⁴⁰

Perhaps twenty-five years later, the author of the *Apocalypse of Ps.-Athanasius* picks up on the same theme; written ca. 715, the work presents a prophecy purportedly given by the fourth-century Athanasius of Alexandria regarding the reminting of Islamic coins under 'Abd al-Malik (696 C.E.). This retrospective prophecy forecasts the coming of a "nation (that) will destroy the gold on which there is the image of the cross of the Lord our God in order to make all the countries under its rule mint their own gold with the name of the beast written on it, the number of whose name is 666."⁴¹

This interpretation remained current in the thirteenth century; one finds it in at least one other Arabic-Egyptian work from Būlus al-Būshī's own era. His contemporary, Ibn al-Rāhib, twice makes reference to the name *Mametios* (ΜΑΜΕΤΙΟΣ) in his *Book of Histories* (*Kitāb al-Tawārīkh*).⁴² First, he recalls "what John the Evangelist mentioned in the Apocalypse regarding the weeks for the coming of *Mametios* and the period of time associated with him."⁴³ Later, in commenting on dating systems, he notes that a particular Thursday was "the first day of the year in which *Mametioe* (sic), i.e., Muhammad, emigrated from Mecca to al-Medina."⁴⁴ In his commentary on Revelation, Būlus al-Būshī inherits this apocalyptic tradition regarding the significance of Muhammad's name.

⁴⁰ John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 121.10; *The Chronicle of John (c. 690 A. D.) Coptic Bishop of Nikiu* (trans. R. H. Charles; Text and Translation Society 3; London: William & Norgate, 1916) 75–76. While it was probably originally composed in Coptic and/or Greek, John of Nikiu's *Chronicle* only survives in an Ethiopic version based directly on an Arabic *Vorlage* (ed. Hermann Zotenberg, "La Chronique de Jean de Nikiou," *Notices et Extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 24 [1883] 125–605). This Ethiopic text serves as the basis for Charles's English translation.

⁴¹ Ps.-Athanasius, *Apocalypse* 9.9; Francisco Javier Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period: Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius," (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1985) 247–590, esp. 529–31. Robert Hoyland argues that the name of the beast in this apocalypse also refers to Muhammad; see his book, *Seeing Islam As Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam; Princeton: Darwin Press, 1998) 283–85; cf. Tito Orlandi, "Un testo copto sulla dominazione araba in Egitto," in *Acts of the Second International Congress of Coptic Studies* (ed. T. Orlandi and F. Wisse; Rome: C.I.M., 1985) 225–34. This work is preserved primarily in Arabic (Graf, *GCAL* 1:277–79), but some fragments of the original Coptic also survive: see Bernd Witte, "Der koptische Text von M 602 f. 52–f. 77 der Pierpont Morgan Library — wirklich eine Schrift des Athanasius?" *Orientalia Christiana* 78 (1994) 123–30; and Harald Suermann, "Koptische arabische Apokalypsen," in *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage*, 25–44, esp. 26–30.

⁴² Samuel Muawwad called my attention to Ibn al-Rāhib's relevance for this study; he is currently preparing an edition of Ibn al-Rāhib's *Kitāb al-Tawārīkh*, which is scheduled to be published by Peeters in the CSCO series.

⁴³ London, British Library (GB-BL), Or. 1337, f. 2b; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek (DE-BS), Or. fol. 434, 3.

⁴⁴ London, British Library, Or. 1337, f. 12b. In the London manuscript of this work cited here, the late eighteenth-century scribe has mistaken the final Coptic *sigma* (ϣ) in the name for an *epsilon* (ϵ). In the Berlin manuscript cited above (Or. fol. 434, 24), a different nineteenth-century scribe

In this context, just as striking as Būlus's embrace of this polemical reading is Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's purposeful decision to suppress it. He notably refrains from quoting the specifics of Būlus's interpretation and concludes by saying, "The attempt to solve the true identity (of the beast) cannot be realized apart from divine inspiration, seeing as there have already been many inventive solutions proposed. How is it possible to find a way to know that name from its sum, apart from knowing the name itself? The wisdom in hiding this name was lest one of the kings or archheretics embrace it and claim that he is that beast."⁴⁵ Far from supplying a name, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar is content here to leave the identity of the beast a mystery to his readers. His reticence to embrace Būlus al-Būshī's more controversial interpretation may be related not simply to hermeneutical method, but also perhaps to the very real social and political concerns he and his family would have had as cosmopolitan Copts who interacted with Muslim colleagues on a daily basis in literary and administrative circles.

■ On Visions and Angels: Ibn Kātib Qayṣar on Revelation 1:1

In the pages remaining, I want to focus my attention on the opening paragraphs of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's commentary, and especially on two textual details that will highlight his understanding of divine visions and the mediatory role of "angels" in this revelatory economy. These two case studies will serve as an introduction to his unique sensibility as a commentator, an interpretive identity shaped by his inheritance of conceptual categories from late antiquity and by key issues related to the transmission and translation of the biblical text from Greek to Coptic and finally to Arabic.

Classified Vision: Revelation on the Edge of Wakefulness

The first textual detail which calls for closer study relates to Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's proclivity toward semantic classification. After a brief, formulaic preface, and after quoting the first two verses of Revelation chapter one, he focuses his attention on the very first word in the text, *ru'yā*, which may be translated as "vision," "revelation," or—as I will most often render it—"revelatory vision." In his preface he had already identified the biblical book itself by the composite form derived from the Coptic and Arabic synonyms, *ru'yā al-ābūghālumsis* (lit. "revelatory vision of the

records the same passage, but leaves an open space where he was supposed to have written the word *Mamētiōs*. This omission is perhaps due to the difficulty he had in working with the Coptic language (this despite the fact that he successfully copied the same word earlier in his manuscript). For more information on the life and work of Ibn al-Rāhib, see Adel Y. Sidarus, *Ibn ar-Rāhib's Leben und Werk: Ein koptisch-arabischer Enzyklopädist des 7./13. Jahrhunderts* (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 36; Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1975); and Johannes den Heijer, "Coptic Historiography in the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Early Mamluk Periods," *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996) 67–98, esp. 83–88.

⁴⁵ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 13.64 (Birmāwī 1994, 274).

Apocalypse”).⁴⁶ The commentator then proceeds to classify “revelatory vision” as “one (of three) species of prophecy (*al-nubūwah*) belonging to the givers of the law.”⁴⁷ He defines the broad category of prophecy as “a divine superabundance mediated through the intellect which has an effect over the rational soul, and then through it over the power of mental vision.”⁴⁸

Within this broad, overarching category of prophecy, he then differentiates between three sub-species or sub-types, which are distinguished according to the recipient’s state of mind at the time the prophetic insight is granted. The first and weakest type, which he also somewhat confusingly labels with the term *prophecy* (*al-nubūwah*) “takes place if it occurs in the condition of sleep, by means of a dream.”⁴⁹ As examples, he points to a series of examples from the Hebrew Bible (dreams of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar interpreted by Joseph and Daniel, the dreams of Jacob and Joseph, and Laban and Abimelech, and some of the prophecy of Daniel). The second type takes place in a condition of (semi-)wakefulness (*al-yaqāzah*) characterized by light slumber (*al-sabāt*), and it is this type that he identifies as “revelatory vision” (*al-ru’yā*).⁵⁰ According to Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, this type of prophecy is described in Scripture as a kind of “sight, (a condition of) being lost in thought and inspiration” through which God speaks and acts in a more powerful way.⁵¹ Examples include the visions of Abraham, Isaiah, Hosea, and Obadiah, some of the visions of Daniel, as well as the one recorded by John in his Apocalypse. Finally, the third type is defined by the recipient’s condition of full wakefulness not affected by any trace of sleepiness, as in the stories of Adam in the Garden of Eden, Abraham’s calling, Moses at Sinai, and (again) Daniel when he was on the bank of the Euphrates. This most powerful species of prophecy he characterizes as a divine “manifestation” (*al-tajallī*) and “message” (*al-khiṭāb*).⁵²

Thus, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s classification of prophecy and vision may be graphically illustrated as follows:

Types of Prophecy (*al-nubūwah*)

1. Prophecy (*al-nubūwah*): experienced in a state of sleep.
2. Revelatory vision (*al-ru’yā*): experienced in a state of semi-wakefulness or light slumber.
3. A divine manifestation (*al-tajallī*) or message (*al-khiṭāb*): experienced in a state of full wakefulness.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Preface (Birmāwī 1994, 29).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1.1 (Birmāwī 1994, 30).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.1 (Birmāwī 1994, 30–31).

⁵¹ Ibid. (Birmāwī 1994, 31).

⁵² Ibid.

Formally, this analysis of prophetic types bears some resemblance to the threefold classification scheme found in the fifth-century Roman philosopher and grammarian Macrobius, who divides revelatory dreams into three categories—the dream (Gr. ὄνειρος; Lat. *somnium*), the vision (Gr. ὄραμα; Lat. *visio*), and the oracular utterance (Gr. χρηματισμός; Lat. *oraculum*).⁵³ Like Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, Macrobius presents these types in terms of an ascending spectrum of revelatory insight: While the meaning of the divine message in a dream (*somnium*) remains (at least partly) concealed and therefore requires interpretation, the true meaning conveyed in an oracle (*oraculum*) is fully manifest to the recipient and does not require any interpretation. It remains an open question whether Ibn Kātib Qayṣar had access to such traditions, and if so, what kind of access he had.

While it is doubtful that he had direct knowledge of Macrobius's writings, there is evidence that similar dream typologies disseminated widely during the medieval period, not only in the Latin language but also in Arabic-speaking contexts.⁵⁴ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's impulse to classify these types of revelatory prophecy is also consistent with the systematic approach of other ancient theorists, the most famous of whom was Artemidorus (second century C.E.), who likewise ranked classes of dreamers according to their importance and level of insight.⁵⁵ By the ninth century, Artemidorus's *Oneirocriticon* had been translated (or better, adapted) into Arabic by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, a Nestorian Christian physician and scholar from Iraq.⁵⁶ As a result, this standard Greek work became widely known throughout the Arabic-speaking world, and Artemidorus's penchant for classification systems and typologies became an integral component of early Islamic (and Arabic Christian) dream interpretation manuals.⁵⁷

⁵³ Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* 1.3.2 and 1.3.8–10; *Macrobe: Commentaire au Songe de Scipion* (ed. Mireille Armisen-Marchetti; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001) 1:10, 1:12–13; Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 14; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 21–23.

⁵⁴ Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, 58–69; John C. Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002) 84; see also my discussion below in the third part of this article.

⁵⁵ Artemidorus, *Onir.* 1.2 (*Artemidori Daldiani onirocriticon libri V* [ed. Roger A. Pack; Leipzig: Teubner, 1963] 9–10); Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 50. Gregory of Nyssa seems to have shared this perspective; according to him, “there are (only) a few who are judged worthy of divine communication,” and “there are some, not all, who participate by means of their dreams in some divine manifestation” (*De hom. op.* 13.12).

⁵⁶ This work has been edited by Toufic Fahd, *Artemidorus: Le livre des songes* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1964); for a discussion, see Lamoreaux, *Early Muslim Tradition*, 47–49.

⁵⁷ For a detailed discussion of Islamic and Islamicate oneirocritical traditions from the seventh to the eleventh century, see Lamoreaux, *Early Muslim Tradition*, passim; see also Nile Green, “The Religious and Cultural Roles of Dreams and Visions in Islam,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3d series, 13 (2003) 287–313. For an example of a Byzantine Greek manual that draws on both Artemidorus and Arabic dream science, see *Achmetis oneirocriticon* (ed. Francis Drexler; Leipzig: Teubner, 1925); Steven M. Oberhelman, *Oneirocriticon of Achmet: A Medieval Greek and Arabic Treatise on the Interpretation of Dreams* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University, 1991); and

However, what distinguishes Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's own threefold classification scheme from that of earlier theorists is the careful attention he gives to the middle category of *al-ru'yā*, which he associates with the revelation granted to John on Patmos, and to the particular cognitive state of the visionary in his semi-waking encounter with the divine. Here, one begins to get a sense of how this Arabic Christian used but also elaborated significantly upon the semantic categories used by ancient Greek writers. In antiquity, there were different perspectives on the relation between the condition of sleep (or wakefulness) and a person's corresponding receptivity (or resistivity) to divine influence. Thus, while Plato and Athanasius of Alexandria could describe sleep as the ideal state for "true and inspired divination,"⁵⁸ others like Gregory of Nyssa characterized the soul's higher perceptions during sleep as "weak and faint."⁵⁹ Among ancient authors there does not seem to have been a consensus regarding the definition of dreams and visions, or regarding the relationship of one to the other. Indeed, scholars have increasingly noted a blurring of these two categories, partly due to inconsistencies in the application of terminology.⁶⁰

What is clear is that Ibn Kātib Qayṣar's threefold categorization according to the states of sleeping, semi-wakefulness (i.e., light slumber), and full wakefulness expands upon earlier systems of classification found in the Greek commentary tradition. Andreas and Arethas of Caesarea, writing in the seventh and tenth centuries respectively, both adhere to a two-type model in their interpretation of the conditions

Maria Mavroudi, *A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation: The Oneirocriticon of Achmet and Its Arabic Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

⁵⁸ Plato, *Timaeus* 71 E. Athanasius of Alexandria (*Contra gentes* 31.38–44) writes: "When the body is still, at rest and sleeping, a man is in inner movement—he contemplates (θεοπεῖν) what is outside himself, he traverses foreign lands, he meets friends, and often through them (the dreams) he divines (μαντεύόμενος) and learns in advance his daily actions. What else could this be but a rational soul (ψυχὴ λογικὴ)?" For a helpful discussion of these sources, see Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, 39–40 (quotation of Athanasius, 40).

⁵⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* 13.9 (PG 44.169A–D, at D); Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, 47–48.

⁶⁰ On Greek and Latin terminology related to dreams and visions, along with a brief review of scholarship, see Gregor Weber, *Kaiser, Träume und Visionen in Prinzipat und Spätantike* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2000) 32–34. John S. Hanson ("Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman World and Early Christianity," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.23.2 [1980] 1395–1427) also emphasizes the "fairly loose application of a variety of terms that can mean 'dream' or 'vision' or both" in the Graeco-Roman world, and the "lack of consistent discrimination between waking and sleeping in connection with any particular term" (1408). He concludes that "the rather rigid modern distinction between the terms dream (a sleeping phenomenon) and vision (a waking phenomenon) is not paralleled in antiquity" (1409). Karola Zibelius-Chen ("Kategorien und Rolle des Traumes in Ägypten," *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 15 [1988] 277–93) has made a similar observation with respect to ancient Egyptian culture, where the etymology of the word for "dream" (*rswt*) derives from the verbal root meaning "to be awake" (*rs*); in this context, he notes that "the Egyptians do not divide conceptually, nor likewise in terms of content, between dream and vision" (282). This blurring of definitional categories in antiquity is also noted by Bernhard Heininger, *Paulus als Visionär. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Herdersbiblische Studien 9; Freiburg: Herder, 1996) 43.

appropriate for the visionary experience; they each describe it as “the manifestation of secret mysteries,” granted to one “who is illuminated and suited for guidance, either through divine dreams (διὰ θείων ὀνειράτων) or in accordance with a waking vision (καθ’ ὕπαρ), which comes from divine illumination.”⁶¹

While Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s concern to distinguish semi-wakefulness as a receptive condition for divine vision represents a new element in eastern Christian commentaries on Revelation, one finds at least one potential precedent in the corpus of patristic literature. In the second-century *Shepherd of Hermas*, the protagonist is said to have experienced two of his five visions after he “became sleepy” (ἀφουπνώσαι).⁶² Modern scholars have wrestled over whether this qualified as a sleeping dream or a waking vision. However, in doing so, their oppositional discourse has had the effect of establishing a categorical distinction between two states whose boundaries sometimes proved to be quite permeable for ancient authors.

The permeability of vision-states in late antiquity is illustrated in early Christian saints’ lives such as the *Life and Miracles of Saint Thecla* and the *Life of Saint John the Almsgiver*. Both of these hagiographical works relate accounts in which the saints appear to female supplicants at night while they are asleep, and in both cases the powerful presence of the saint causes the supplicants to wake up. However, this transition from unconsciousness to conscious awareness does not immediately disrupt the vision; instead, the divine experience is mediated across the boundary from sleeping (ὄναρ) to waking (ὕπαρ).⁶³ Could such accounts have raised questions in the minds of ancient readers about the possibility of a third, liminal state of visionary receptivity? While this question cannot be answered with certainty based on late antique evidence, it was just such a middle state—a condition somewhere

⁶¹ Andreas of Caesarea, *Apoc.* 1.1; Arethas of Caesarea, *Apoc.* (PG 106.501A); see also Elias V. Oiconomou, “Authorities and Citizens in John’s Book of Revelation,” available online at http://www.myriobiblos.gr/bible/studies/economou_revelation.asp (cited 16 October 2007).

⁶² *Vis.* 1.1.3; see also 5.1.1. In other instances, he experienced visions “while (he) slept” (*Vis.* 2.4.1; 3.1.2). Over against Robin Lane Fox (*Pagans and Christians*, 382–89) and J. Reiling (*Hermas and Christian Prophecy*, 157 n. 6) who characterize the former instances as either a trance-like state or somnambulism, Patricia Cox Miller argues for the status of all of these visions as full-fledged dreams: see *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, 133; and “‘A Dubious Twilight’: Reflections on Dreams in Patristic Literature,” *Church History* 55 (1986) 153–64, esp. 158. However, her conflation of these episodes seems motivated in part by her desire to gather all instances of ὄρασις (“vision”) under the oneirocritical category of dreams experienced in sleep.

⁶³ *Vie et miracles de Sainte Thècle* (ed. Gilbert Dagron; Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1978) 408 (Miracle 46.5); Leontius of Neapolis, “Life of Saint John the Almsgiver” in *Leontios’ von Neapolis Leben des heiligen Johannes des Barmherzigen, Erzbischofs von Alexandrien* (ed. Heinrich Gelzer; Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1893) 15–16. Gilbert Dagron discusses both of these works in the context of arguing for the equivocality of the conventional opposition suggested by the terms ὄναρ (a vision experienced in sleep) and ὕπαρ (a vision experienced while awake); see his article, “Rêver de Dieu et parler de soi: Le rêve et son interprétation d’après les sources byzantines,” in *I sogni ne medioevo* (ed. Tullio Gregory; Lessico Intellettuale Europeo 35; Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1985) 42 n. 21.

between sleeping and waking—that occupied a central place in the classificatory system of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar.

Conflating the Messenger: John as Angel, Apostle, Prophet, and Priest

The second textual detail I want to focus on requires a close examination of the Arabic biblical text quoted by Ibn Kātib Qayṣar in comparison with its Coptic and Greek antecedents.

Translation of the Arabic text of Revelation 1:1, as quoted by Ibn Kātib Qayṣar⁶⁴

“The revelatory vision (*al-ru’yā*) of Jesus Christ that God gave to him who taught his servants about what must come to pass quickly and who gave a sign to them and sent it **by way of his angel, his servant John** (*min qibali malākihi ‘abdihi Yūḥannā*).”

Translation of the Bohairic Coptic text of Revelation 1:1⁶⁵

“The revelation (ⲁⲡⲟⲓⲁⲗⲱⲙⲉⲛⲓⲥ) of Jesus Christ that God gave to him (i.e., John), to show his servants those things that must happen quickly. And he signified them, having sent them **through his angel to his servant John** (ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲓⲧⲟⲧⲥ ⲙⲡⲉⲣⲁⲓⲧⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲉⲣⲃⲱⲕ ⲓⲱⲁⲛⲛⲛⲥ).”

Translation of the Greek text of Revelation 1:1⁶⁶

“The revelation (ἀποκάλυψις) of Jesus Christ that God gave to him, to show his servants the things that must happen quickly. And he signified (them), having sent them **through his angel to his servant John** (διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ).

The change in the Arabic text quoted by Ibn Kātib Qayṣar is attention-grabbing: The translator has conflated the roles of John and the angel in the text. John himself becomes the divine messenger through which the revelation is shared with all humanity.

The source of this variant reading of Revelation 1:1 was confusion on the part of the translator over the syntax of the Bohairic Coptic text on which he relied.⁶⁷ His error seems to have been that he mistakenly read the consecutive *ⲙ*-prefixes as marking two nouns in apposition, instead of as elements of two separate prepositional phrases.⁶⁸ It should be noted that the translator in question was probably not Ibn Kātib Qayṣar himself, but rather an earlier scribe. This hypothesis is supported

⁶⁴ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.1 (Birmāwī 1994, 29).

⁶⁵ George Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect* (= *CoptNT-North*) (4 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905; repr. Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1969) 4:444.

⁶⁶ Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th rev. ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001) 632.

⁶⁷ For a study of issues related to the Arabic translation of the Bohairic biblical text, see Georg Graf, “Arabische Übersetzungen der Apokalypse,” *Biblica* 10 (1929) 170–94.

⁶⁸ This verse is unfortunately not available for comparison in the Sahidic version, where the extant text begins with the last word of Revelation 1:3; see George Horner, *The Coptic Version of*

by the fact that the Arabic text used by Būlus al-Būshī shares this same reading, even as it differs in other details.

Translation of the Arabic text of Revelation 1:1, as quoted by Būlus al-Būshī⁶⁹

The apocalypse (*abūghālīmsīs*) of Jesus Christ that God gave to inform his servants about what must come to pass quickly. He taught them and sent them **by the hand of his angel John, his servant** (*‘alā yad malākihi Yūḥannā ‘abdihi*).

Here we have a vivid example of how idiosyncrasies in the process of early translation from Coptic to Arabic provided new contexts for creative commentary on the biblical text as it was received in medieval Egypt by Arabic-speaking writers.

In the case of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, this textual detail becomes the focus of both etymological analysis (in relation to the language of the Hebrew Bible) and theological-ethical reflection (on Christian practice and leadership). First, he makes a point of emphasizing that “the naming of John as an angel (*malāk*) follows the custom of the Bible in the naming of all the prophets and apostles and priests as angels.”⁷⁰ He grounds this custom in the fact that the term *malāk* in Hebrew means “apostle” (i.e., “messenger,” Ar. *rasūl*). Ibn Kātib Qayṣar then plays off this fact in drawing a correlation between the function of angels and apostles, who are both considered as specially privileged emissaries sent by God to deliver a message.

Second, having drawn out these etymological connections, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar shifts his attention to the theological-ethical implications of John’s identification as an “angel” for understanding Christian practice and leadership. In this context he identifies four additional attributes—“abstinence, the renunciation of bodily desires, contemplation of God . . . , and an abundance of knowledge”⁷¹—associated not only with angels and apostles, but also with prophets and priests.

The characterization of ascetic practice as angelic in character was a common trope in late antiquity; Christian monks were understood to embody the life of angels in their detachment from the world and in their teachings.⁷² It is in the context of this high cultural value placed on asceticism within the Egyptian church that Ibn Kātib Qayṣar identifies the author of Revelation not only with the apostle John but

the New Testament in the Southern Dialect (= *CoptNT-South*) (7 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924; repr. Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1969) 7:258.

⁶⁹ Sbath Arabic MS 1014, f. 1b; cf. British Library, Or. 1329, f. 4a.

⁷⁰ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.1 (Birmāwī 1994, 32).

⁷¹ Ibid. (Birmāwī 1994, 32–33).

⁷² In the Alexandrian-Egyptian tradition, see, for example, Origen of Alexandria, *Princ.* 1.8.4; Athanasius of Alexandria, *Orationes contra Arianos* 3.25, 51; and Shenoute, *When the Word Says*, f. 2va–b (New York, Pierpont Morgan M664A[6]); published in *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (ed. Leo Depuydt; Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts 4; Oriental Series 1; Leuven: Peeters, 1993) 145; and (Ann Arbor, Michigan 158, 20d): published in *Coptic Manuscripts from the White Monastery: Works of Shenute* (ed. and trans. Dwight W. Young; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek; Vienna: Verlag Brüder Hollinek, 1993) 162.41–49 and 167.228.

also with John the Baptist, who was understood in the early church as a biblical model or type for the monastic life.⁷³ Thus, he writes, “John has been called ‘the Baptist,’ and he is also a priest, prophet, and apostle after the fashion of an angel. About him it is said, ‘Behold, I am sending my angel (i.e., messenger) before you’ (Mark 1:2; cf. Malachi 3:1).”⁷⁴ For this Arabic commentator, John the Evangelist, John the Apostle, and John the Baptist are one and the same.

Finally, in his commentary on Revelation 1:1, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar demonstrates a further concern to tie John’s prophetic, apostolic, and ascetic legacy to the ecclesiastical role of the priest or bishop, “on account of the fact that all of them are prepared for God’s service and the administration of his worship.”⁷⁵ John himself is recognized as the one who became the first bishop in Asia Minor at the presiding city of Ephesus, where he “preached before the transfer of that leadership to Constantinople in the days of Constantine the Great.”⁷⁶ Thus, in writing to the seven churches, the divinely-inspired John was directing his message to cities that “belonged to his (episcopal) seat” and to “the bishops of these churches,” who are identified as his “disciples.”⁷⁷

These bishops, in their authority as heads of the churches, are understood to have inherited John’s own angelic stature, and Ibn Kātib Qayṣar deciphers several more cryptic details in the first three chapters of Revelation to support this point. The seven stars in Revelation 1:16 are “the angels of the seven churches,” and since priests are also identified as angels, the intended referent must be “the leaders of the seven churches.”⁷⁸ This sequential interpretative logic connecting “stars” to

⁷³ See the following examples from Alexandrian Greek and Coptic sources: Athanasius, *Ep. virg.* 191–203; *Vit. Ant.* 7; David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) 55, 169, 188, 250–51, 259; Jerome, *Vit. Paul.* 1; and the anonymously authored *Life of St. Onnophrius* 11 (*Journeying into God: Seven Monastic Lives* [trans. Tim Vivian; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996] 177). For a recent study of ascetic interpretations of John the Baptist’s diet in the writings of late antique and early medieval Christian authors, see James A. Kelhoffer, *The Diet of John the Baptist: “Locusts and Wild Honey” in Synoptic and Patristic Interpretation* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 176; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 134–93. J. Massyngberde Ford has put forward the hypothesis that chapters 4–11 in Revelation actually derive from a revelation originally given to John the Baptist; see *Revelation* (The Anchor Bible 38; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975) esp. 30–37, 50–53, 69–183. However, it is important to point out here that Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s identification of the visionary in Revelation with John the Baptist is manifestly not based on modern historical critical arguments, but rather on specific onomastic and thematic connections he was interested in developing within his thirteenth-century ecclesiastical context.

⁷⁴ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.1 (Birmāwī 1994, 33).

⁷⁵ Ibid. The author also cites the witness of (Ps.-)Dionysius of Alexandria in support of this view, noting that “Dionysius adds a fifth virtue—namely, participation in the priesthood.”

⁷⁶ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 2.11 (Birmāwī 1994, 52–53).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1.3 (Birmāwī 1994, 34). Since Ibn Kātib Qayṣar identifies Ephesus as the first bishopric (*ra’s al-kursī*, “primary seat”) prior to Constantine’s establishment of Constantinople (*Commentary on the Apocalypse* 2.11; Birmāwī 1994, 52–53), he accordingly views John as filling the role of archbishop and the bishops of the other cities as his followers or “disciples.”

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1.8 (Birmāwī 1994, 48).

“angels” and thence to “bishops” and “church leaders” is sustained throughout the commentary.⁷⁹ This logic also provides the Arabic commentator with an interpretive key for understanding the peculiar form of epistolary address that appears in each of the seven messages recorded in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation (i.e., “to the angel of the church.”)⁸⁰ In this context, he repeatedly presses home the point that these “angels” were, in fact, the bishops of these historical church communities, even mentioning Polycarp (*Fīlfārīyūs*) of Smyrna by name, whose “crown of life” in Revelation 2:10 is understood to indicate his martyrdom.⁸¹

■ Final Thoughts: Dreams, Visions, and Christian-Muslim Apologetic in Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s Commentary

The two examples discussed in the previous section are meant to serve as a preliminary introduction to Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s work as a commentator. As a pair of case studies, they provide intriguing glimpses into how this medieval author appropriated and developed categories from Greek late antiquity, and how the transmission of the biblical text into the Arabic language conditioned its interpretive reception in thirteenth-century Egypt. Much more remains to be done to flesh out Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s *modus operandi* as an Arabic exegete reading Revelation in an Islamic intellectual and social environment, and I hope this article prompts further research in this area. Before I close, however, let me suggest at least one fruitful avenue for contextual study—an inquiry into the question of how Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s classification of revelatory vision related to early Muslim theories of prophecy and dreams.

There is abundant evidence for early medieval Islamic dream interpretation, and even a cursory glance at this large corpus reveals typologies of classification that are often quite elaborate. In one case, a Muslim oneirocritic named Sijistānī (937–1008 C.E.) divides dreams into six types, and then goes on to identify fourteen grades of dreamers and thirty-five different aspects of dream interpretation. Another theorist, Dīnawarī (1008 C.E.), introduces his work by addressing a series of fifteen topics related to dream experience, including the nature of sleep, behavior that encourages “true” dreams, the character of the angel responsible for dream revelations, as well as the definition of dreams and their relation to prophecy (to name only a few themes).⁸² In the context of performing the particular task of bibli-

⁷⁹ See, e.g., Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.10 (on Rev 1:20); 2.11 (on Rev 2:1); *passim* (Birmāwī 1994, 51, 52 *passim*).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.11–14; 4.15–17 (Birmāwī 1994, 52–53, 56–57, 60, 65–66, 71–72, 80, 86–87).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3.12 (Birmāwī 1994, 57–59).

⁸² For a discussion of Sijistānī and Dīnawarī, see Lamoreaux, *Early Muslim Tradition*, 34–37, 59–62. My comparison of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s understanding of “revelatory vision” with Muslim theories about dreams is indebted to Lamoreaux’s important work, which has opened up the study of this previously neglected corpus of Islamic literature.

cal commentary, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar shares certain elements of this ethos in which systematic methodologies reigned supreme.

Indeed, in comparing his discussion of *al-ru'yā* with those of his Muslim contemporaries, one observes correspondences not only on a formal level, but also in substantive terms. In classifying *al-ru'yā* as one species of prophecy, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar follows a judgment held by most early medieval Muslim oneirocritics. One of the early witnesses to this tradition, Ibn Qutaybah (828–889 C.E.), describes *al-ru'yā* as a kind of “divine inspiration” (*al-wahy*) and a mode of “prophecy” (*al-nubūwah*).⁸³ Later Muslim theorists sought to be even more precise; they frequently defined *al-ru'yā* as one of forty-six types of prophecy available to humankind, a view that was picked up by Arabic Christian authors like the tenth-century Iraqi Nestorian Bar Bahlūl.⁸⁴ In presenting his own classification of prophecy, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar may have been adapting and simplifying such models in combination with earlier threefold typologies of dream visions developed in late antiquity by writers like the aforementioned Macrobius.

However, while Ibn Kātib Qayṣar definitely shared similar assumptions with his Muslim contemporaries on the classification of *al-ru'yā* as a form of prophecy, he also diverged from them on one critical point. Medieval Muslim theorists primarily understood the word *ru'yā* to refer to a divinely sent dream during sleep, a form of revelation best exemplified by Muhammad's reception of the Qur'ān. In early Islam, the true dream visions (*ru'yā*, pl. *ru'ā*) experienced by the prophet Muhammad are consistently set over against the unreliable dreams (*ḥulm*, pl. *aḥlām*) that bedeviled his critics.⁸⁵ By contrast, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar interprets the words *ḥulm* and *ru'yā* in nearly synonymous terms. Both have a positive connotation, but, according to his

⁸³ For a discussion of Ibn Qutaybah's dream manual, see Lamoreaux, *Early Muslim Tradition*, 27–34. The manual, entitled *ʿIbārat al-ru'yā*, or *Taʿbīr al-ru'yā* in Arabic, is preserved in two manuscripts—a complete version at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Yahuda ms. ar. 196), and an incomplete copy at the Language, History, and Geography Faculty of Ankara University in Turkey (Is. Saib Sincer I, 4501.2, ff. 180a–217b). The section of text referred to above, found near the beginning of the Jerusalem manuscript (Yahuda, ms. ar. 196, fol. 2a), is cited and translated by Lamoreaux (28); however, my choice of English equivalents for the terms, *al-wahy* and *al-nubūwah*, diverges from his translation.

⁸⁴ Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Bahlūl, *Kitāb al-dalāʾil li al-Ḥasan ibn al-Bahlūl* (ed. Yūsuf Ḥabbī; Kuwait: Manshūrāt maʿhad al-makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿarabīyah, 1987) 384; Lamoreaux, *Early Muslim Tradition*, 83, 154–65 (esp. 157).

⁸⁵ According to the ninth-century al-Bukhārī (= Muḥammad ibn Ismaʿīl al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* [ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir; 9 vols.; Beirut: Dār al-Jil, n.d.] 9.37): “The beginning of the inspired revelation (*al-wahy al-ru'yā*) received by God's messenger took place in his sleep (*al-nawm*).” This reference corresponds to *Kitāb al-taʿbīr* (Book 91.1) in the edition edited by M. Ludolf Krehl (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1862) 4.347; the same text is also available online at <http://www.al-eman.com/hadeeth/viewchp.asp?BID=13&CID=196#s2> (cited Oct 16, 2007). For an example of the interpretation of this text in medieval Egypt, see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* (13 vols. plus index; Cairo: Maktabat al-Salafīyah, 1986) 12.368. The pejorative associations connected with the term *ḥulm* arose out of Muslim interpretations of the Qur'anic text; see esp. Suras 21.5 and 52.32. For a discussion of these *aḥādīth* and *tafāsīr* traditions, see Lamoreaux, *Early Muslim Tradition*, 109–17.

system of classification, the former is still clearly subordinated to the latter. While the term *ḥulm* (“dream”) is used to describe “the weakest species of prophecy,”⁸⁶ the kind experienced in sleep, the term *ru’yā* (“revelatory vision”) refers to a higher grade of revelatory experience, one that takes place in a waking, daydream state.

Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s reinterpretation of these terms would have had profound implications for interreligious dialogue and debate in medieval Egypt. If the prophet Muhammad received his messages from God while asleep, as was widely assumed by Muslim interpreters like al-Bukhārī,⁸⁷ then his experience would necessarily correspond to the first (and lowest) category of prophecy in Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s schema. It would no longer qualify as a revelatory vision (*ru’yā*), but rather as a prophetic dream (*ḥulm*). The semi-waking vision (*ru’yā*) of John is, by definition, identified with the second level of prophecy, and therefore in comparison accorded higher status. One related terminological detail should not escape our attention at this point. When Ibn Kātib Qayṣar labels John’s vision as a form of divine inspiration (*waḥy*),⁸⁸ he is borrowing a term regularly used by Muslim interpreters to describe the Qur’ān, the record of the revelation conferred on Muhammad. Here, however, the Arabic Christian commentator reappropriates this language for a very different end—namely, to mark John as a divinely-inspired messenger, as an apostle (*rasūl*) who rivals and surpasses his counterpart, the prophet (*rasūl*) of Islam. In this context, it is also noteworthy that this Copto-Arabic author identifies Jesus Christ as the sole source of this revelation, the one who granted this vision to John and who “taught his servants,” the apostles (*al-rusul*), the “superabundance” of his truth.⁸⁹

With these details in view, one begins to see more clearly the delicately drawn lines of Ibn Kātib Qayṣar’s subtle scriptural apologetic against Islamic theology. At the beginning of his *Commentary on the Apocalypse of John*, he constructs a classification schema that utilizes Qur’ānic terminology and Islamic typological models, but that crucially reworks these elements to underscore the apostolic inspiration of John and the authority of Christ in contradistinction to rival Muslim claims regarding divine revelation. In this way, Ibn Kātib Qayṣar introduces a distinctively Arabic Apocalypse, a biblical text and commentary directed to those among his own language community who had an ear to hear “what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.1 (Birmāwī 1994, 30).

⁸⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 9.43–44.

⁸⁸ Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 1.1 (Birmāwī 1994, 31).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Here I borrow the phrase that is repeated seven times throughout the second and third chapters of Revelation, once for each of the messages sent to the seven churches of Asia (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

The *New Atlantis*: Francis Bacon's Theological-Political Utopia?*

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In his seminal 1968 study of Francis Bacon's political thought, Howard B. White argued that the *New Atlantis* is "a rewriting of a Platonic myth, and a rewriting clearly intended as a refutation."¹ Bacon's attack on Plato, however, is partially mediated through his critique of Christianity. Indeed, Bacon pays more explicit attention to the tropes and themes of revealed religion than he does to those of the story of the "old" Atlantis told in Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias*. Scholars are divided as to the exact nature of Bacon's intentions in his treatment of religion in the *New Atlantis*. Richard Tuck suggests that "the desire for a reconstructed religion" is "explicit in the blend of Protestantism and Judaism" created by Bacon.² Most scholars, however, unlike Tuck, argue that Bacon was more interested in undermining religion—or more specifically, its political authority—than in reconstructing it. Laurence Lampert's argument that Bacon stands at the head of "the actual holy war fought in Europe . . . , the warfare of science against religion that tamed sovereign religion"³ typifies much of the scholarly commentary on the *New Atlantis* since White's reading of it almost forty years ago.⁴ The consensus

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¹ Howard B. White, *Peace Among the Willows: The Political Philosophy of Francis Bacon* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968) 112.

² Richard Tuck, "The Utopianism of *Leviathan*," in *Leviathan After 350 Years* (ed. Tom Sorrel and Luc Foisneau; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 137.

³ Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times: A Study of Bacon, Descartes, and Nietzsche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 68.

⁴ See Jerry Weinberger, "Science and Rule in Bacon's Utopia: An Introduction to the Reading of the *New Atlantis*," *American Political Science Review* 70 (1976) 865–85; idem, introduction to *New*

view is that Bacon promotes the politic manipulation of the tropes and themes of revealed religion so that they might be made to support the modern scientific project and the cause of peace from religious strife: "Bacon's lifelong concern for religion uniformly expressed itself in arguments for moderation in religion."⁵ White argues that Bacon demonstrates how "religious turmoil" can be countered "not only by religious toleration, but also by religious eclecticism, amounting to religious universality."⁶

Most recently, Stephen A. McKnight has disputed the argument that Bacon wished to undermine and to transcend the particularities of Christianity in favor of a generic universal "religion" and the view that Bacon's treatment of religious matters is "disingenuous and manipulative."⁷ He contends that "Bacon's program of utopian reform presented in the *New Atlantis* is grounded in genuinely and deeply felt religious convictions" and that this text affords the reader an overview of Bacon's comprehensive "program for rehabilitating humanity and its relation to nature."⁸

The *New Atlantis* . . . offers a multilayered analysis of the disorder of the Europeans' society and prescribes necessary cures. The contrast between European nations and Bensalem [the name of the island utopia in the *New Atlantis*] points to the sources of order and disorder. Both Bensalem and Europe have the benefit of Christian religion. Bensalem's Christianity is a pure form of gospel Christianity, uncorrupted by human ignorance and error. Europe's Christianity by contrast has been distorted and is plagued by human ignorance and error.⁹

In this paper, I disagree with both the view that Bacon's comparative treatment of religion and science in the *New Atlantis* is exclusively critical of religion and the rival view that Bacon's program of reform is grounded in sincere religious conviction. I suggest that both of these views neglect the fact that the *New Atlantis* represents a utopia that is effectively divided against itself in terms of its laws, its politics and its religion. The *New Atlantis* does not offer a consistent portrait of an

Atlantis and the Great Instauration, by Francis Bacon (ed. Jerry Weinberger; rev. ed.; Wheeling, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1989) vii–xxxvi; Timothy H. Paterson, "On the Role of Christianity in the Political Philosophy of Francis Bacon," *Polity* 19 (1987) 419–42; idem, "The Secular Control of Scientific Power in the Political Philosophy of Francis Bacon," *Polity* 21 (1989) 457–80; Robert K. Faulkner, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress* (Lanham, Md.: Rowan & Littlefield, 1993); Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times*; David C. Innes, "Bacon's *New Atlantis*: The Christian Hope and the Modern Hope," *Interpretation* 22 (1994) 3–38; Richard Kennington, "Bacon's Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli," in *On Modern Origins: Essays in Early Modern Philosophy* (ed. Pamela Kraus and Frank Hunt; Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2004) 57–78.

⁵ Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times*, 67.

⁶ White, *Peace Among the Willows*, 132.

⁷ Stephen A. McKnight, *The Religious Foundation of Francis Bacon's Thought* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2005) 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 11, 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

ideally organized state that may be viewed in opposition to its degraded European counterpart, but rather an image of a state that is torn between the rival claims of religion and science concerning the order of nature, instead of the rival claims of different forms of Christianity.

There is evidence for the view that the crudely instrumentalist theology of the *New Atlantis*¹⁰ represents Bacon's attempt to draw on what he learned from Machiavelli about using the "weapons" of Christianity to further its own demise and to fuel the modern scientific project.¹¹ It must be said, however, that if this is all that Bacon was doing in the *New Atlantis*, he was not altogether successful. Bacon's appropriation of Christian (and Jewish) narrative patterns, tropes and themes is so lavishly extensive that one is forced to wonder at what point a work so indebted to its "opponent" simply recreates the perceived problems that caused Bacon to attack religion in the first place. Bacon maintained that while "religion delights in . . . veils and shadows,"¹² science clears up obscurities and "submit[s] to examination those things which the common logic takes on trust."¹³ Strangely enough, however, one can easily read the *New Atlantis* itself as a tribute to and a manual of instruction in the practice of obscurantism and deliberate deception on the part of scientists and the state alike.¹⁴

The peculiar nature of this problematic text in relation to the rest of Bacon's oeuvre has led scholars to raise questions about just how utopian Bensalem is supposed to be. Does it really represent Bacon's view of what Richard Kennington calls "a perfect society"¹⁵ in which the respective truth claims of revealed religion and natural science have been seamlessly reconciled? Ian Box notes that Bacon's essays "suggest a preoccupation with political life that is absent from the *New Atlantis* . . . the concern with such character traits as cunning, envy, vanity,

¹⁰ The pointedly instrumentalist approach to theology which Bacon takes in the *New Atlantis* does not reflect the full range of his theological views, but rather a politically purposive restatement of those views designed for popular consumption as well as for more sophisticated audiences. Bacon's decision to make the text available in English as well as in Latin reflects his hope that the *New Atlantis* would be as widely read as possible. See Benjamin Milner, "Francis Bacon: The Theological Foundations of the Valerius Terminus," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997) 245–64 for a discussion of Bacon's abandonment of his attempt to set "his program for the advancement of science on a theological footing" (245).

¹¹ Kennington, "Bacon's Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli," 57.

¹² Preface to "Of the Wisdom of the Ancients," in *Works of Francis Bacon* (ed. James Spedding, Robert L. Ellis, and Douglas D. Heath; 14 vols.; London: Longman, 1857) 6:696.

¹³ Bacon, "The Great Instauration," *New Atlantis*, 23.

¹⁴ That the theology of the *New Atlantis* does not represent a sincere attempt on Bacon's part to confront the theological challenges posed by the development of natural science is reflected in the most explicit statement on the purpose of religion in the text. Joabin, who is designated as a "wise man" (Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 65) refers with approval to the Bensalemite saying that "*the reverence of a man's self is, next religion, the chiefest bridle of all vices*" (Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 68). The purpose of religion is to restrain vice but one can also draw upon "self-reverence" (which is Bacon's term for what we would call "self-esteem") for the same purpose.

¹⁵ Kennington, "Bacon's Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli," 65.

boldness, anger and revenge has no application in a fable whose characters are uniformly virtuous and altruistic. In Bacon's ideal society of science the problems of ethical and civil life that figure so prominently in the *Essays* no longer exist."¹⁶ These inconsistencies have led several scholars (most notably White, Weinberger, Faulkner and Lampert) to argue that Bacon's narrative is far from being sincere or straightforward in its claims and intentions. Against the interpretation of the *New Atlantis* as a purely sincere utopia, Weinberger has argued that "[t]he *New Atlantis* suggests the problem, as much as the promise, of technology and the story raises questions about the ways and means of the scientific project, the ends and limits of the conquest of nature, and the implications of science and technology for human life and values."¹⁷

■ The Contribution of This Paper

The overall argument of this paper is consistent with Weinberger's point that Bacon suggests the limits of science as much as he does its possibilities and with Faulkner's argument that "the *New Atlantis* exhibits the most ominous of Baconian political innovations: "the relationship between the promise of progress by control of nature and the management of peoples by control of human nature."¹⁸ My argument differs from the work of Faulkner and of Weinberger (to which I am greatly indebted in both cases) in terms of sources, evidence and conclusions. I argue that Bacon suggests the existence of a jarring conflict between the project of mastering nature and that of mastering human nature.¹⁹ In other words, the relationship referred to by Faulkner (i.e., that "between the promise of progress by control of nature and the management of peoples by control of human nature" is not harmonious). Based on a novel reading of the text that calls attention to Bacon's use of biblical, classical and apocryphal texts, I claim that the overall object of Bacon's dual critique of religion and science is to demonstrate that the forced reconciliation of the religious and scientific visions of the "relief of the human estate" that we see in the *New Atlantis* can only be accomplished at the cost of a potentially tyrannical politics. Bacon demonstrates how such politics (based on his politically and theologically significant concept of the "order of nature") might be redirected (rather than done away with completely) and made to serve the larger objective of mastering nature (and, as Faulkner suggests, human nature). Bacon does not, however, offer any promise of the conflict being solved decisively in favor of science, although he holds out considerable hope that science and religion (in their specific capacity as

¹⁶ Ian Box, "Bacon on the Values of War and Peace," *The Seventeenth Century* 7 (1992) 119.

¹⁷ Jerry Weinberger, "On the Miracles in Bacon's *New Atlantis*," in *Francis Bacon's New Atlantis: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (ed. Bronwen Price; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 110.

¹⁸ Faulkner, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress*, 230.

¹⁹ For a discussion of the concept of human nature in Bacon's work, see Heidi D. Studer, "'Strange Fire at the Altar of the Lord': Francis Bacon on Human Nature," *Review of Politics* 65 (2003) 209–35.

rival, all-inclusive explanations of the totality of experience) can be used to limit their respective tendencies toward excess.

With several significant exceptions,²⁰ most scholars have concurred with Richard Tuck that the *New Atlantis* is a fragmentary work due to accidental causes, rather than formal design. The vast majority of scholars (with a few important exceptions) continue to accept without demur the claim that the *New Atlantis* is fragmentary primarily because of the apparent fact that it lacks an account of “the best state or mould of a commonwealth.”²¹ The question of the work’s completeness and the issue of whether or not it contains an account of utopian politics center upon the same basic problem of the missing or at best, ambiguous account of the regime in Bensalem.²² Here, I argue (for reasons that differ from those cited previously by other scholars) that the *New Atlantis* is complete and that it does not lack a political account of the state or commonwealth. It is accurate to say that it lacks a utopian account of the *best* state of a commonwealth, but it offers a portrait of the best state that may be possible, given the intractable nature of the conflict between religion and science that challenges the efforts of the political philosopher (or the theologian) to resolve it in the name of peace.

As other scholars have convincingly demonstrated along different lines, the contradictions and textual allusions of the *New Atlantis* suggest an esoteric political and theological commentary,²³ which does not hold out the utopian hope that the natural sciences can save the world while dispensing with the traditions of politics and religion. Ultimately, the ostensible “utopia” of Bensalem represents the necessity of concession to necessity, as much as an achieved triumph over it.

I follow several related lines of argument in discussing Bacon’s representation of the “ideal” relation of scientific, political and religious authority. As I shall discuss, the argument that Bacon primarily sought to elevate science by distorting the claims of Christianity on behalf of the Epicurean goals of bodily pleasure and freedom from metaphysical terror, while satisfactory on one level, does not account for the astonishingly complex and painstaking treatment of religious themes and theological claims in the *New Atlantis*. For one thing, it does not take into account Bacon’s

²⁰ See White, *Peace Among the Willows*; Weinberger, “Science and Rule”; idem, introduction; Faulkner, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress*; and Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times*.

²¹ William Rawley, preface to Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 36.

²² Weinberger, “Science and Rule,” 865.

²³ Strong arguments have been presented on behalf of the position that the *New Atlantis* contains an esoteric political teaching (most notably White, *Peace Among the Willows*; Weinberger, “Science and Rule”; idem, introduction; Faulkner, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress*; and Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times*). However, even those scholars who have deemed the *New Atlantis* to be complete and or possessed of an esoteric political teaching have not detailed in full the substance of Bacon’s ostensibly “hidden” teaching on politics. Denise Albanese discusses the *New Atlantis* from the perspective of contemporary colonialist theory in “The *New Atlantis* and the Uses of Utopia,” *English Literary History* 57 (1990) 503–28, as does Claire Jowitt in “‘Books will speak plain?’ Colonialism, Jewishness and Politics in Bacon’s *New Atlantis*,” in *Francis Bacon’s New Atlantis*, 129–55.

treatment of tropes and themes from the Hebrew Bible. While I cannot agree that Bacon's utopia reflects sincere religious convictions, the alternative suggestion that Bacon should be viewed simply as attacking religion in order to further the cause of science, while not wholly inaccurate, is reductive at best. At the same time as Bacon represents the scientist as something tantamount to a savior of humankind, and science as institutionalized benevolence, he presents a clear-eyed critique of the assumptions embodied in those images. He quietly questions the belief that some combination of physical comfort, pleasure and freedom from metaphysical terror is an ideal or utopian image of "the human estate" without, however, suggesting some alternative conception of a *summum bonum*.

■ The Focus and Approach of This Paper

In order to discuss a critical issue that has heretofore been understated (or even ignored) in considerations of Bacon's work, I shall focus my discussion on one extended passage of central importance in the work, depicting a ceremony called "The Feast of the Family." Although I cannot examine all of the most important passages in Bacon's narrative in the context of this paper, I shall suggest that taken as a whole, the *New Atlantis* may be read in terms of an extremely peculiar syncretistic sequence of quasi-liturgical rites, festivals and occasions. Bacon extracts disparate elements of rites from Christian, Jewish, Greek (and to a lesser extent, Roman and Persian) contexts and compounds them into novel and virtually unrecognizable forms.²⁴ Using a series of pointed textual allusions to biblical, apocryphal and legendary sources, he creates a narrative sequence that is punctuated by composite versions of vernal and autumnal rites.

Here, my examination of the "Feast of the Family" episode shall have to suffice as an example of Bacon's intricately detailed use of religious tropes and themes. It is in this dense and tightly constructed portion of the narrative that Bacon's theological-political teaching is most powerfully developed. Before discussing the Feast of the Family in detail, I shall give a brief account of the events leading up to it.

■ The *New Atlantis*

The *New Atlantis*, which was probably written in 1624 or 1625 but published in 1627, tells the story of "one and fifty" European sailors who, in the course of straining after their own self-preservation, are carried up by "strong and great winds" into a new world, the somewhat paradisiacal island of Bensalem. The narrative begins with the sailors attempting to navigate an unpredictable and

²⁴ Howard White was the first to point out Bacon's "eclectic" syncretism of Christian, Jewish, Roman, Greek, Persian and Egyptian elements, although he does so toward a different end than I do. His emphasis on the Egyptian elements of the Feast causes him to neglect its biblical and classical subtexts. Without developing this point, White suggests that the Feast of the Family is "a presumably Persian feast" and argues (mistakenly, I believe) that the images of the Feast represent "doctrine and symbolism derived from the myths of Isis" (*Peace Among the Willows*, 144).

inhospitable “wilderness of waters.”²⁵ Eventually, the sailors are allowed to enter a land in which something reminiscent of the prelapsarian earthly paradise seems still intact. The bulk of its ostensibly sedated populace apparently has little to do but feast, dance, and stand around in rows on either side of the streets, watching a series of processions, spectacles, and parades suggestive of an extended holiday. They are too involved in fully taking in the parade of images passing by to bicker over religious differences that might lead to more serious forms of conflict. Peace prevails among the strangely wooden denizens of Bensalem, although religious differences persist. Given the stupefied passivity of the island’s citizenry, it is not clear why Bensalem needs to have a code of law, and indeed the one they do have is quite mysterious. Bensalem is described by one of its figures of authority as having “many wise and excellent laws”²⁶ yet those laws are not applied uniformly to all of its subjects and a number of Bensalemites have their actions regulated by the decrees of a figure whose decisions do not appear to take the law into account at all. The decidedly muddled nature of Bensalemite law seems particularly strange in light of Bacon’s own thoroughgoing knowledge of law and his ambitious conceptions of comprehensive legal reform. Bacon’s use of Jewish and Christian ritual law might lead one to argue that the island is supposed to be a scientifically sophisticated theocracy, thus explaining the coincidence of religious and secular law, but there are serious obstacles to supposing that Bensalem’s legal code is characteristic of a recognizable form of theocracy.

For instance, one might reasonably expect that an island whose religion represents what Tuck correctly refers to as a “blend of Protestantism and Judaism” would include the institution of a Sabbath, but the narrative lacks any mention of one (a rather glaring omission), even though the stranded European sailors who visit Bensalem stay for more than seven days.²⁷ In addition, as more than one scholar has pointed out, the Christianity depicted on the island seems to be decorative at best, despite the lavishness of Bacon’s range of biblical allusions.²⁸ In a small masterpiece of understatement, Paterson observes that “Bacon’s characteristic manner of employing biblical texts for rhetorical purposes suggests a certain inner distance from Christianity.”²⁹

²⁵ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 37.

²⁶ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 68.

²⁷ Bensalem does have some sort of ceremony of “divine service” on feast days (Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 61) while Salomon’s House has a regimen of “certain hymns and services, which we say daily, of laud” (idem, 83).

²⁸ On Bacon’s extensive use of biblical allusions and quotations, see especially Paterson, “On the Role of Christianity”; idem, “The Secular Control of Scientific Power”; Faulkner, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress*; Innes, “Bacon’s *New Atlantis*”; Ralph Lerner, “The Jihād of St. Alban,” *Review of Politics* 64 (2001) 5–26 and Charles Whitney, *Francis Bacon and Modernity* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1986) 23–37.

²⁹ Paterson, “On the Role of Christianity,” 425.

Is the *New Atlantis* meant to suggest a sphere of existence like that of the New Jerusalem in which there is no Sabbath, because every day is a simulacrum of one?³⁰ That explanation fails because the entire island is structured around a research institution which is sometimes called “the College of the Six Days’ Works.”³¹ For the Bensalemite scientists working in the College of the Six Days’ Works, there is effectively no seventh day of rest at all, while others (i.e., their otiose and presumably non-scientifically inclined counterparts) have been spared by science from the exertions associated with wakefulness and the workaday world. The world has been reconfigured to give the nonscientific populace of Bensalem the impression of being in a peaceful half-slumber; the problems that required most people to stir from their repose have been solved by science and technology. This might explain why the *New Atlantis* appears at points to be populated by people who have transcended the need to struggle and to wrest from ungenerous nature the requisite means of sustenance. Money seems to be relatively meaningless in Bensalem because the island has so much of it; its officers will not even look at the money offered by the visiting Europeans, and to the natives, merchandise and gold and silver “are all one.”³² However, the transcendence of material necessity suggested by the Bensalemites’ indifference to money scarcely amounts to freedom from political authority or from exclusive concern for the needs of the body on the part of the idle and ostensibly satiated populace.

In suggesting as much, I disagree with the arguments of some scholars who have suggested that Bacon may be depicting a world in which “there is no ground for politics or government,” because “the state has withered away” as the result of the triumph of science.³³ Kennington suggests that “[w]isdom is so embodied in the institutions that the political, and especially force, is minimized.”³⁴ The end of politics and of the need to employ coercive force is the result of a mastery of nature so comprehensive that it seems to include mastery over the political nature of human beings. The visiting European sailors come from a fearful world of scarcity which is at the mercy of the hostile and unpredictable forces of nature. They enter into a world in which such forces appear to have been soundly defeated at the hands of science. Why is it, then, that “nature” is still employed as a source of normative

³⁰ Michele Le Doeuff and Margaret Lasera suggest that the world depicted in the *New Atlantis* represents a Sabbath, but do not follow up on their suggestion. “Voyage dans la pensée baroque,” in *La Nouvelle Atlantide* (Paris: Payot, 1983).

³¹ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 58.

³² Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 45.

³³ Samuel H. Beer, “Two Models of Public Opinion: Bacon’s ‘New Logic’ and Diotima’s ‘Tale of Love,’” *Political Theory* 2 (1974) 163–80, at 166.

³⁴ Kennington, “Bacon’s Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli,” 66. Timothy Paterson observes that “Bacon looked forward to a greatly increased public role for scientists, and perhaps to an outright rule of scientists over non-scientists” (“The Secular Control of Scientific Power,” 461), but this would amount to a transfer of rule rather than the obviation of the need for it.

standards in Bensalem? “Natural” is a term of praise in the Bensalemite lexicon as well as a descriptor of all that the island has ostensibly defeated and overcome.

■ The Feast of the Family

As they are instructed in the wonders of Bensalem, the visiting sailors gradually lose any sense of being bound to their former lives.³⁵ A brief acquaintance with some of the island’s natives suffices “to make [them] forget all that was dear to [them] in [their] own countries.” Bensalem is so full of “many things right worthy of observation and relation” that the narrator suggests that “if there be a mirror in the world worthy to hold men’s eyes, it is that country.”³⁶ The first thing seen in that mirror is a festival called the “Feast of the Family,” which the narrator describes as “a most natural pious and reverend custom . . . showing that nation to be compounded of all goodness.”³⁷

The peculiarity of regarding this custom as natural (not to mention natural *and* pious and reverend) is suggested not only by the obvious paradox of a “natural custom” but also by the fact that this feast, “which is done at the cost of the state”³⁸ is apparently occasional and exceptional rather than regular and seasonal in nature. On the face of it, the Feast of the Family does not seem to be the sort of gathering that occurs as a matter of course at a particular time of year, such as a harvest festival, a relic of the time in which most people could only enjoy leisure when the agricultural cycle allowed for it. While the initial sequence in the *New Atlantis* detailing the arrival of the visitors to Bensalem has echoes of the spring festivals of Easter and Passover, the Feast of the Family seems to be, at least in part, an adaptation of an autumnal grape harvest festival. However, Bacon’s festival has been displaced from its autumnal context. It is no longer part of a cycle, but an isolated event (if one that may be repeated upon occasion).³⁹

Through the narrator’s description of the Feast of the Family as a “most natural . . . custom,” Bacon suggests something of the paradoxical quality of festal holidays in general, which simultaneously have their origin in natural cycles, and also in events outside of the norm (including crises and events presumed to be miraculous).⁴⁰ Those events are then commemorated and ultimately institutionalized into the order of time. The Feast of the Family is occasional and noteworthy without being so wildly exceptional that it may be regarded as miraculous. Far from being an event that is memorable because it is ultimately inassimilable into a conception of an

³⁵ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 60.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ See White, *Peace Among the Willows*, 171.

⁴⁰ See Henri Frankfort, “State Festivals in Egypt and Mesopotamia,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 15 (1952) 1–12, at 1.

“order of nature,” it is said to be a feast “wherein nature did so much preside.”⁴¹ The feast is not granted as a matter or course to all the families of Bensalem at a particular time of year by virtue of the fact that it is that time of year; rather, it is “granted to any man that shall live to see thirty persons descended of his body alive together, and all above three years old.”⁴² In Bensalem, having thirty children actually *increases* prosperity. Prosperity, it is even ironically suggested, follows from having partaken of the Feast of the Family “ever after in an extraordinary manner.”⁴³ To it are summoned “all the persons of the family, of both sexes . . . to attend,” and to enjoy the munificence of the state while renewing their allegiance to the “order of nature.”⁴⁴

For the first two days of this three-day festival, “the Father of the Family, which they call the *Tirsan*” adjudicates in cases pertaining to “the good estate of the family.”⁴⁵ He is assisted in this enterprise by “three of such friends as he liketh to choose” and by “the governor of the city or place where the feast is celebrated” who “put[s] in execution by his public authority the decrees and orders of the *Tirsan*.” The ostensibly private authority of the *Tirsan* apparently does not suffice to invest his “decrees and orders” with the status of binding constraints. If the *Tirsan*’s decrees are disobeyed, the assistance of the governor’s public authority is invoked, but the narrator observes that such a course of action is seldom necessary in light of the “reverence and obedience they give to the order of nature.”⁴⁶ Where the order of nature fails to inspire reverence and obedience, the state is invoked to correct for its deficiencies. Revering and obeying the order of nature, then, means obeying and appearing to revere the *Tirsan* (as its representative) in the interest of avoiding an encounter with the coercive power of the state, which has apparently not been vanquished in Bensalem to the extent that Kennington suggests.⁴⁷

The difficulty of attempting to account for Bacon’s decision to insert a festival “wherein nature did so much preside”⁴⁸ into a book that ostensibly represents the triumph of art and artifice over nature is not reduced by the fact that the *Tirsan* (and, by extension, “the order of nature” that he represents) seems to have authority only insofar as it is imparted to him and enforced by the “public authority” of the state. Nature does not provide a source of commonly recognized public authority. In the “order of nature” represented by the *Tirsan*, private concerns for “the good estate of the family” are in first place. Only to the extent that the private concerns for “the good estate of the family” can be made to coincide with those of the state can the “order of nature” (and the authority of the *Tirsan*) be said to offer any promise

⁴¹ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 66.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Kennington, “Bacon’s Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli,” 66.

⁴⁸ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 66.

(even indirectly) of a principle beyond an interest in the well-being of the Tirsan's individual and collective body.

During the festive portion of the Feast of the Family, a hymn is sung in honor of "Adam and Noah and Abraham; whereof the former two peopled the world and the last was the Father of the Faithful."⁴⁹ The processes of peopling the world with the descendants of one's body and figuratively fathering the faithful are subtly but effectively differentiated; it should be stressed that only the latter is explicitly designated as fatherhood. The hymn singing session is preceded by the ceremonial procession of the Tirsan and "all his generation or lineage" into some sort of a banquet room with "an half-pace at the upper end."⁵⁰

After they are all seated on the half-pace, a herald enters, accompanied by two youths, one of whom is carrying a golden stalk of grapes with a long stem. The herald reads out loud from the King's Charter, detailing the gifts and rewards that are to be imparted to the Tirsan as "our well-beloved friend and creditor," for "the king is debtor to no man, but for propagation of his subjects."⁵¹ While the expression "debtor to no man" was characteristically used in reference to God,⁵² here the expression is used to characterize the unnamed king of Bensalem. It is not necessary to suggest that the unnamed king is meant to "be" God in any literal sense in order to argue that he is meant to represent a figure tantamount to a "king of kings" or to an emperor who, for all intents and purposes, represents something like the height of divine magnanimity, which gives, but cannot receive. If the Tirsan himself were to be regarded solely as a *subject* of the king, he would not have been described as a "friend and creditor." As such, the Tirsan seems to have king-like status that is analogous to that of the "friend" whose grant of authority he receives.

The king, whose disembodied presence is registered in his writing and in his image on the seal of the charter, has a more significant claim upon the children of the Tirsan than does the Tirsan himself, whose relation to his children, it is stressed, exists through his body and represents "the order of nature." The Tirsan stands up while the charter is read out loud, but perhaps nature has made it impossible for him to do so by himself; his sons support him from either side. The herald then delivers the charter to the king on the half-pace by hand while "all that are present" recite an acclamation: "Happy are the people of Bensalem."⁵³ The herald also gives to the Tirsan the golden cluster of grapes (which has as many grapes as there are descendants of the family in question), who then gives it to one of his sons, who is thereafter known as "the Son of the Vine." The basis upon which this son, among so many others, is singled out for this distinction is never stated. His

⁴⁹ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 62–63.

⁵² The scriptural proof-text of the idea that God is indebted to no man is found in Romans 11:35. See the comment of Jean Calvin, *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta* (ed. Petrus Barth and Guilelmus Niesel; 5 vols.; Monachii: C. Kaiser, 1968) 4:iii–xi on this passage from Romans.

⁵³ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 63.

eligibility for the position is inherited, but he is also chosen; the position of “Son of the Vine” does not fall to him by virtue of his status as the eldest son, for instance. The Tirsan retires into some unspecified place at this point. When he returns for dinner, he does not sit next to the Son of the Vine, but “alone” under a canopy of ivy, as before: “none of his descendants sit with him, of whatever degree of dignity soever, except he hap to be of Salomon’s House.”⁵⁴ While the Son of the Vine had to be chosen in order to receive his golden cluster and the privilege of sharing the same house as the Tirsan, the sons who “hap to be of Salomon’s House” seem to have something close to a right to be seated with the Tirsan in his place of authority on a state-sponsored occasion. The Tirsan then retires to “a place where he maketh some private prayers” again, after which he gives a postprandial blessing to his sons and daughters.⁵⁵

By this point, a slight but notable shift has occurred—the members of the Tirsan’s lineage are referred to as sons and daughters of Bensalem, rather than the persons “descended of [the] body”⁵⁶ of the Tirsan. Here, it is suggested that the Tirsan’s concerns can in fact be made to coincide with those of the state, but it does not follow that his concern may then be understood to extend beyond his family estate to include the common good. Rather, his conflation of his children with the children of Bensalem suggests that his concern extends beyond his own estate only in the sense that the state is construed as somehow being coextensive with his family.

The Tirsan stresses that his children have “breath and life” solely because of him, not even implying a helpful assist from their mother, in reminding them of the source of their being.⁵⁷ The words of the general blessing (administered to each

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁷ It is not entirely evident that a mother of all these descendants is still alive, given the cryptic manner in which Bacon raises the possibility of her presence at the ceremony: “if [my italics] there be a mother from whose body the lineage is descended, there is a traverse placed in a loft above on the right hand of the chair, with a privy door, and a carved window of glass, leaded with gold and blue; where she sitteth but is not seen” (*New Atlantis*, 62). Traverses were commonly used by members of the royal family to shield themselves from public view during ceremonies unless their presence was required outside of it. See the description of the royal traverse on the right hand side of the communion table in Westminster Abbey from 1601, as quoted in David Dean, “Image and Ritual in the Tudor Parliaments,” in *Tudor Political Culture* (ed. Dale Hoak; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 243–71, at 263: “ther was also within the Chapple dore wher the Tombes be a little private place hanged richlye wher in was a pan of coales if her Majestie pleased to repose herself.” See also the description of the placement of the Queen’s Traverse in St. Edward’s Chapel in 1559 and the provision of a private place for her to say her prayers (comparable perhaps to that in which the Tirsan makes his “private prayers”) in A. L. Rowse, “The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth I,” *History Today* 3 (1953) 301–10, at 307: “the ‘Queen’s traverse to make her ready in after the ceremonies and service [is] done’ is placed within [the chapel] on the south side of the altar. . . . Outside the chapel, in the sanctuary on the south side are placed ‘the carpet and cushions for the Queen to kneel upon when she taketh her prayers to Almighty God. . . . The carpet is of blue velvet and the cushions of cloth of gold.’”

son and daughter individually) express the hope that “the days of thy pilgrimage [will be] good and many.”⁵⁸ As has been noted, Bacon is alluding here to Jacob’s remark to Pharaoh in Genesis 47:9 that “few and hard have been the years of my life, nor do they come up to the life spans of my fathers during their sojourns.”⁵⁹ After the general blessing, the Tirsan singles out two (and only two) of his sons who are possessed of “eminent merit and virtue” and awards to each of them “a jewel, made in the figure of an ear of wheat, which they ever after wear in the front of their turban or hat.”⁶⁰ The sons who “hap to be of Salomon’s House” are not chosen, but simply take their place by their father’s side (without any tokens being distributed).⁶¹ All the sons and daughters are blessed by virtue of the fact that they are “persons descended from [the Tirsan’s] body.”⁶²

One question about the “natural” authority of the Tirsan that Bacon hints at (but ultimately leaves unresolved) pertains to the relation between the private man who has lived “to see thirty persons descended of his body altogether” and the designation of that man as “the *Tirsan*.”⁶³ Given the manner in which the role of the Tirsan is depicted, it might appear to us to be something akin to a “king for a day” or a “governor of the feast” whose authority extends only as long as the festival lasts, yet the decrees and orders he gives to his children are binding and state-enforced. They are also quite comprehensive. The Tirsan is in charge of the “good estate” of his family as a whole; his jurisdiction pertains to matters large and small, including “discords or suits between any of the family,” the relief of “distressed and decayed” persons within the family, the reproof and censure of persons given over to vice, and instructions concerning marriages and “the courses of life which any of them should take, with divers other the like orders and advices.”⁶⁴ Given the wide range of matters which fall into the Tirsan’s limited sphere of absolute jurisdiction, it is not clear what, if anything, would be left for some alternative legal or political

⁵⁸ The self-flattering grandiloquence of the Tirsan’s speech, with its note of assumed portentousness (“thy father saith it,” etc.) makes it hard to think that Bacon was not being satirical here.

⁵⁹ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 64 n. 193. All quotations in English from the Hebrew Bible are from the *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

⁶⁰ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 64.

⁶¹ See The House of Lords Precedence Act of 1539 (31 Henry VIII ch. 10), concerning the seating arrangements for royal family members in Parliament: “noe [person] or [persons] of what estate degree soever he or they be of, excepte onlie the [King’s] children, shall at any tyme hereafter attempte or to sytt or have place at any side of the clothe of estate in the pliamment chamber, nother of the one hand of the Highnes nor of the other, whether the Majestie be there or absent.” *Statutes of the Realm: Printed by Command of His Majesty King George the Third* (11 vols.; London: Eyre and Strahan, 1810–1822; repr., Buffalo, N.Y.: Hein, 1993) 3:729. The statement that “none of [the Tirsan’s] descendants sit with him, of whatever degree of dignity soever, except he hap to be of Salomon’s House” (Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 63) suggests that the descendants who “hap to be” of Salomon’s House are equivalent in dignity to the king’s descendants in the order of precedence in Great Britain.

⁶² Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 60.

⁶³ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 60–61.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

authority to usurp for itself. If, in keeping with the conventional wisdom that the work is an apolitical fragment, we imagine that Bacon had some putative other source of governance in mind (an account of which he theoretically failed to include in the *New Atlantis*) we would be forced to surmise that the children of the Tirsan (and all the children of Tirsans before and after the particular Tirsan featured in the Feast detailed in the narrative) are somehow exempt from or not protected by the same body of law as the rest of the Bensalemites.

Hence, although one might initially think of the Roman figure of the *rex sacrorum* in connection with the Tirsan, further reflection suggests that the Tirsan's authority is not as circumscribed as that of the former. It is of vital importance that the governor "put[s] into execution the decrees and orders" (rather than the helpful hints and suggestions) of the Tirsan without any mention of a review process by which the justice of those dictates may be assessed or any means by which those decrees and orders can be rejected before they are carried out. Bacon leaves open the possibility that the Tirsan may have sons who "hap" to be of Salomon's House, yet there is no suggestion that these particular sons are exempt from his rulings. It appears then, that some of the "wise men" of Salomon's House could conceivably have important aspects of their lives (indeed, the very "courses of life which any of them are to take") regulated by the state-enforced decrees of the Tirsan. It is worth calling attention to the fact that, in this instance, the will of the Tirsan (embodied in his "decrees and orders") *determines* the action of the state, at least in the negative sense of causing it to exercise its power in putting into execution his decrees when the reverence and obedience of his children do not suffice to prompt their submission to his will. The Tirsan is not solely a figurehead who presides over rather silly ceremonies at state-sponsored family parties.

It has been suggested that in calling the father of the family the Tirsan, Bacon was alluding to a Persian adjective meaning timid or fearful.⁶⁵ While that may be, it seems at least as likely that he had in mind as well the title of תרשתא, which is a Persian loan word in postexilic biblical Hebrew meaning "His Excellency" or "governor."⁶⁶ It is best known for its use in reference to provincial governors and officials whose authority has been entrusted to them by an empire. The fact that the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 61 n. 171.

⁶⁶ As the friend of several prominent Hebraists involved in creating the KJV, Bacon would have had access to such limited knowledge of biblical Hebrew as he required. Paul de Lagarde derives תרשתא from the Bactrian *antarekhšātra*, meaning "der die Person des Königs vertritt." *Mittheilungen I* (4 vols.; Göttingen: Dieterich, 1884–1891; repr., (Osnabrück: Zeller Verlag, 1982) 236. See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (ed. M. E. J. Richardson; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 1798 and the studies cited there. On the problem of pinning down the meaning and etymology of תרשתא, see Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Was Nehemiah the Cup Bearer a Eunuch?," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 (1980) 132–42; James Barr, "The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53 (1985) 201–35, at 212–13; and W. St. Clair Tisdall, "The Aryan Words in the Old Testament," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 2 (1911) 213–19, at 218–19.

Tirsan, like the *תרשתא*, is always referred to with the definite article (as *התרשתא*) suggests that it may be the title of an office or an honorific pertaining to some of the functions of an office, with the effect that the “father of the family” is also “the Tirsan.” The Tirsan, of course, is not strictly equivalent to the *תרשתא*; the latter seems to be something of a mix between a petty *tyrannus*, who rules for the private good of his extended body, and the more benign figure of the *תרשתא*.

At first glance, Bacon would seem to have expanded the ceremonial and familial role of the *תרשתא* at the expense of his public authority in such a way that most of the latter has effectively been redistributed to the governor. When one considers the Tirsan in terms of the representation of his role in the Feast of the Family, rather than his political significance, it is difficult not to think that Bacon must have loosely had in mind the role of the *תרשתא* in the feast of Sukkot, particularly as it is described in chapter 8 of Nehemiah. The difficulty in identifying the traces of Sukkot in Bacon’s depiction of the Feast of the Family arises because, as I shall discuss, he is drawing from the imaginative or distorted representations of Sukkot as a wine festival in Plutarch and Tacitus (and from other grape harvest festival traditions) as much as he is drawing from the biblical account of the holiday that occurred at the conclusion of the grape harvest.⁶⁷ Bacon deliberately drew together elements from a number of different traditions in creating the Feast of the Family, so his representation of it should be seen as a broad composite of those elements, although one of its sources does seem to be the account of the feast in Nehemiah.⁶⁸ In making the possession of thirty descendants the standard of fruitfulness sufficient to merit reward, Bacon may have had in mind the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic tradition (which was known to him in its medieval form) that Adam was the father of thirty sons and thirty daughters after his expulsion from Eden.⁶⁹ Having thirty

⁶⁷ On the association of the grape harvest with Sukkot, see Jeffrey L. Rubinstein, “The Sukkot Wine Libation,” in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine* (ed. Robert Chazan, William W. Hallo, and Lawrence H. Schiffman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999) 575–91, at 577.

⁶⁸ In Nehemiah the feast of Sukkot (spread out over several days) is associated with teaching the law to the reassembled children of the exile as well as with the festive rituals themselves. In ch. 7, Nehemiah, acting as *התרשתא*, gathers together “the children of the province” who had returned to Jerusalem after having been released from the Babylonian captivity. The genealogy of the children assembled is recounted before the festival of Tabernacles is celebrated. In terms of sources from other traditions, I would suggest as possibilities the yearly ceremony of rewarding fathers who have the most sons referred to in Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.136, as well as the practice of Caesar Augustus in honoring and rewarding the fathers of at least three children according to the *Jus Trium Liberorum*. See Cassius Dio, *Roman History: Books 56–60* (trans. Earnest Cary; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) 5–9. In seventeenth-century British usage, the practice represented by the *Jus Trium Liberorum* (of rewarding men for the number of their progeny) had acquired the connotation of an empty honor. See William P. Williams, “The Childrens Threes,” *American Notes & Queries* 9 (1971) 83–84.

⁶⁹ Bacon would have been familiar with the idea that Adam may have had thirty sons and thirty daughters from his reading of the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine, a book to which he refers in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 6:413. The original source of the reference to the thirty sons and

descendants was a trope for abundant progeny in the biblical tradition as well; in Judges 10:4, the Gileadite judge Jair, who led Israel for twenty-two years, is said to have “had thirty sons, who rode on thirty burros and owned thirty boroughs in the region of Gilead.” Bacon disregards the biblical distinction between sons and daughters, implying that in fathering thirty children of either sex, the Tirsan would be rising to a standard of fruitfulness associated with biblical patriarchs.

Whatever the merits of the Tirsan might have been that enabled him to father thirty children, Bacon does not imply that wisdom and good judgment are necessarily among them. The potential dubiousness of the Tirsan’s decrees pertaining to the marriage of his children in particular is hinted at by the fact that the merchant Joabin, whose discussion with the narrator directly follows the account of the Feast, describes a set of marriage laws that say nothing about the wisdom of accepting the authoritative role of fathers in giving “direction . . . touching marriages.”⁷⁰ It is not at all clear how the “wise and excellent laws touching marriage” described by Joabin (who is himself said to be “wise . . . and learned, and of great policy and excellently seen in the laws and customs of [Bensalem]”⁷¹) are to be conjoined with the unwritten decrees of the Tirsan, unless we are to understand that the children of the Tirsan are subject to different legal codes and customs. If having marriages directed by patriarchal decree is to be regarded as an ideal, why aren’t all Bensalemites divided up into clans governed by individual Tirsans, rather than only those families in which thirty children have been fathered by one man? In Bensalemite law, marriages that do not secure parental consent are specifically said *not* to be voided, although the descendants of such marriages are eventually subject to financial penalty. The children of the Tirsan are presumably forced by the state to obey their father’s directives “touching marriage,” since “the decrees and orders of the Tirsan” are said to be “put into execution” by “public authority.”⁷² In Bensalemite customs, individual physical attractiveness plays a central and even an institutionalized role in the choice of marriage partners, for partners are subject to scrutiny aimed at detecting the “hidden defects in men and women’s bodies.”⁷³ (Hidden defects of character are not mentioned.) In the context of Joabin’s discussion of this custom, absolutely nothing is said of the determinative role of paternal decrees like those of the Tirsan. It is the set of laws and customs described by Joabin that is deemed to be “wise and excellent” whereas no qualifying adjective is applied by the narrator to the decrees and orders of the Tirsan. At best, Bacon seems to be suggesting that there exists a manageable conflict between disparate

thirty daughters of Adam may be found in Gary A. Anderson and Michael E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve* (2d rev. ed.; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1999) 33–33E.

⁷⁰ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 61.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 65–66.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 68.

bodies of law and custom in Bensalem; at worst, he is hinting at a society in need of a comprehensive program of political and legal reform.

To a large extent, the Tirsan embodies what Bacon saw as the limitations of “the Father of the Family” as a potentially tyrannical model for public authority. This is especially problematic in light of the fact that his function is, again, not exclusively ceremonial. The consultation concerning the “good estate of the family” (replete with the issuance of “decrees and orders”) on the first two days of the feast is as important as the feasting itself. If one accepts that Bacon may have been loosely considering the role of the *תרשחא* in constructing that of the Tirsan, one notes that in Nehemiah, it is the *תרשחא* himself who summons all the children to be assembled, while it appears that in Bensalem the state assembles the children of the Tirsan for the feast. The *תרשחא* is responsible for getting the returned children of exile to hear the law and to grasp it (with the assistance of the priest, Ezra, and the Levites).⁷⁴ In the course of examining the law, it is discovered that they are to “live in booths” during the feast of Tabernacles, at which point the people go out and gather several sorts of branches from trees and build out of them temporary shelters for themselves and their own families “every one upon the roof of his house and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God” (Neh 8:16).

The branches used in building the leafy booths are from olive, myrtle and palm trees and everyone builds his own booth. In contrast, there is only one leafy canopy (made out of ivy) in the Feast of the Family and it rests over the Tirsan alone as he sits in his chair on the feast-day that follows the extended family council meeting. The fact that no one else is sheltered by it, or possessed of a canopy of his or her own is a phenomenon that is consistent with the implied exclusivity of the Tirsan’s concern for the good of his own body. Bacon emphasizes the nature of the ivy by having the narrator remark that it is “an ivy somewhat whiter than ours, like the leaf of a silver asp, but more shining, for it is green all winter.”⁷⁵ The canopy of ivy is not simply a single wreath or strand; rather, “the state is curiously wrought with silver and silk of divers colours, broiding or binding in the ivy . . . and veiled over at the top with a fine net of silk and silver. But the substance of it is true ivy; whereof after it is taken down, the friends of the family are desirous to have some leaf or sprig to keep.”⁷⁶ As I have already suggested, Bacon was not without precedent in putting together a syncretistic compound of elements from biblical and bacchic festivals. Plutarch’s *Moralia* includes a description of Tabernacles as a

⁷⁴ Ezra reads the law out loud to the assembled people in such a way that they are “caused . . . to understand it.” As a result, they cry at first but after having been reassured by Nehemiah and told that they should be eating and drinking and celebrating, they are filled with “great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them” (Neh 8:12). Gathered again “on the second day” to “understand the words of the law” and relay them to the people are “the chiefs of the fathers of all the people,” along with the priests and the Levites, as well as Ezra, who is now designated as a “scribe” (Neh 8:13).

⁷⁵ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 61.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 61–62.

feast involving ivy and vines that is devoted to Bacchus. The figure of Symmachus, who has apparently conflated the fasts and feasts of all three autumnal holidays in the biblical liturgical year, refers to the “so-called Fast at the height of the vintage” and notes that it involves shelters “plaited for the most part of vines and ivy. They call the first of the two days Tabernacles.”⁷⁷

The only other plant-related item involved in the feast is that of the “cluster of grapes of gold, with a long foot or stalk” that is carried by one of the “young lads” who walk on either side of the herald as he enters the room where the feast is held.⁷⁸ Confusingly or intriguingly enough, this image evokes a ritual of the Greek vintage festival known as the *Oschophoria*, or the “Carrying of Grape Clusters,” one of the relatively more decorous of the Dionysian rites. In this state-sponsored autumnal rite (whose ostensible founder is Theseus), two *oschophoroi* (who are boys dressed as women) carry branches with grapes on them as they accompany a herald into the Temple of Dionysus, from which point they progress to the temple of Athena.⁷⁹

■ Political Implications of Bacon’s Satire

What precisely might Bacon have been doing by weaving strands of such widely disparate subtexts into his account of the Feast of the Family and why should it matter to us that he did so? In considering what it suggests about his understanding of the “order of nature” and the role of royal and paternal authority in upholding it, one must first consider the possibility that Bacon’s portrait of the ostensibly “natural pious and reverend custom” of the Feast of the Family and its figurehead, the Tirsan, is both more satirical and more serious than it has been considered to be.⁸⁰ It should be emphasized that what is being satirized in the Feast of the Family episode is precisely the composite ideal of luxury, pleasure, prosperity, and exclusive

⁷⁷ *Mor.* 4.6.671–72. The figure best known for having been seated under a canopy of ivy is, of course, Dionysos. See Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 238. See also Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5, for an account of Sukkot as a Dionysian revel.

⁷⁸ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 62.

⁷⁹ On the *Oschophoria*, see Plutarch, *Thes.* 23.2. See also Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (2 vols.; München: Beck, 1967) and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter: Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World* (trans. Andrew Szegedy-Maszak; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) 114–16. White, *Peace Among the Willows*, 169–73 suggests that the festival honors fertility in the persons of Osiris and Isis (as the mother hidden in the traverse) but misses the reference to the *Oschophoria* and the suggestion of drunkenness and debauchery in the allusion to Dionysos (the Greek equivalent of Osiris), perhaps because he does not consider the allusions to have topical significance.

⁸⁰ On a broader level, it should be noted that Bacon is not going to all this trouble simply to suggest that biblical rituals were actually bacchic in nature. As the work of Plutarch and Tacitus in this respect suggests, that had already been done long before Bacon’s time, so harping on this theme would have been somewhat tedious. Bacon is not intimating that some sort of semibiblical but secretly bacchic rites should be restored or must be established if the human race is to really enjoy its relieved estate.

concern for private goods that Bacon has been regarded as taking very seriously indeed. How can the *New Atlantis* be said to promote a vision of life devoted to self-satisfaction, self-promotion, and bodily comfort and pleasure when the central event in its narrative mocks this very complex of ideals? If this is the upshot of deliverance from the ills of nature by means of science, then Bacon's outlook for the future seems to be an odd mixture of grim sobriety and black humor as much it is one of boosterism for the scientific project.

It may be evident by this point that I believe the Tirsan to be, in part, a satirical portrait of Bacon's patron and (it would seem) nemesis, King James I, for reasons that I shall later elaborate. While I do not consider the parody of James I to be the most important aspect of Bacon's depiction of the Tirsan, anyone who denies that such a portrait is indicated needs to explain why direct allusions to the ceremonial appurtenances of English kingship are there. Some plausible alternative reading of the allusive references to kingship would have to be proposed to sustain an objection to the suggestion that Bacon was indeed commenting on kingship. It is difficult to imagine how such a pointed portrait of a hybrid father-king could have fallen into such a painstakingly crafted text by accident. If one does accept that something like a portrait of a patriarchal ruler exists—even in the rudimentary outline that I have sketched—what is its importance?

As funny as Bacon is (and he has not been given enough credit for being as deeply funny as he was) his intentions in embedding a theological-political drama in miniature in the text of the *New Atlantis* are not purely comical. If one concedes that suggestions of a comment on kingship by divine right exist, but then proposes that they are merely funny and trivial details, one must ask what Bacon hoping to accomplish by cluttering up his book with such trivialities. Was he simply indulging his unforgiving sense of humor in mocking King James? James had offered insufficient support for Bacon's program for the advancement of learning during the time that Bacon was in favor at court and also had failed to show mercy to Bacon when he was in a state of disgrace. To view his portrait of the king as "Father of the Family" as being primarily an act of vengeance, one would have to assume that Bacon was willing to waste one of the last opportunities he would have to record his thoughts for posterity before his death in an attempt to redress by means of merciless satire his admittedly bitter personal grievances.

Entertaining an alternative possibility—that Bacon was doing something much more important and much more ambitious—does not demand that we assume that his motives were strictly pure and lofty. It does demand that we consider several facts about the text of the *New Atlantis*. First, the text itself encourages us to consider the centrality of the Feast of the Family to our interpretation of Bacon's utopia as a whole. The narrator observes that it is the "natural, pious and reverend custom" of the Feast that "[shows] that nation to be compounded of all goodness."⁸¹ If the Feast is not clearly suggestive of "goodness" (as I have suggested is the case),

⁸¹ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 60.

we need to consider how that affects our understanding of the ostensibly simple “goodness” of the island as a whole. Secondly, given the long and well-developed tradition of political thought on the question of the extent to which familial and political rule are identical (beginning with Plato and continuing with Aristotle’s dissent in Book 1 of the *Politics*), it would strain credulity to suggest that someone as well-informed as Bacon could have inserted himself unknowingly into the extremely important debate on this subject.⁸² Bacon’s creation of a figure that blurs the boundary between the figures of “father” and “king” was not an innocent or a trivial flight of fancy; it pertains to a more general philosophical consideration of the relationship between the family and the state, between paternal and political authority, and between public and private goods.

The *New Atlantis* is only funny when we take its apparent absurdities (such as the Feast of the Family) seriously. The idea of a society that is torn between conflicting principles of rule (with the effect that some subjects of the kingdom seem to be subject to arbitrary “decrees and orders” while others are governed by “wise and excellent laws”) may be thought to have some remote comic potential in that it produces absurdities; however, it does not seem to me to be an intrinsically amusing and or trivial problem. Bacon does show us the funny aspects of this conflict, but that should not lead us to neglect the serious and the ineluctably political elements of his satire upon Bensalem as paradise restored. In the beginning of the *New Atlantis*, Bensalem seems to be governed by a judicious combination of a vague and costless love for mankind and of the capacity to induce mortal fear. Somehow the island that appears to its visitors to be a stunning example of bland and undemanding piety, humanity and charity is the same one that also seems to threaten strangers with banishment or even death for no particular reason.⁸³ When we arrive at the episode of the Feast of the Family, it seems that Bensalem is ruled according to the principle of “the order of nature” which ultimately amounts to unaccountable personal rule (embodied in the figure of the Tirsan). In direct conflict with this sort of rule is one described by Joabin: the regime of “wise and excellent laws.” From yet another angle, Bensalem appears to be governed by scientific expertise (represented by the Father and Fellows of Salomon’s House). The ubiquitous presence of the state does not wholly suffice to harmonize the conflict I have mentioned, even if it does render it manageable.

Because the version of paternal rule that we see in the *New Atlantis* is state-enforced, and because the categories of children and subjects overlap to a considerable extent, the rule of the Tirsan cannot be understood as confining itself exclusively to the familial sphere. Bacon situates the figure of the Tirsan at the

⁸² See Mark Hulliung, “Patriarchalism and Its Early Enemies,” *Political Theory* 2 (1974) 410–19 and Gordon J. Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) on the topic of the relation between familial and political life in Early Modern patriarchal thought.

⁸³ See Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 44.

juncture between theological-political and paternal rule. In considering the figure of the Tirsan as a father-king, it should be emphasized that he does not exercise his judgment exclusively at home. Moreover, he does not execute the decrees and orders of the state, but vice versa. While particular Tirsans only sit in judgment for a short time, the institution of the Tirsan is *not* presented as being wholly transitory in nature. Bensalem is supposed to have already arrived at a well-polished state of utopian perfection, so the Feast of the Family must be understood in light of that “perfection,” rather than as a stopgap measure to be employed until the problem it seeks to redress has gone away for good.

■ Bacon’s Comment on Patriarchy and Divine-Right Kingship

Here, at the risk of reiterating points I have already suggested, I shall briefly summarize the reasons for suspecting the Tirsan to be a comic portrait of a patriarchal king with a distinct resemblance to James I. First, one must point to the title of “Tirsan.” The authority of the Tirsan, like that of the *תרשטא*, is strictly limited to local authority within the context of some larger whole. The *תרשטא* has authority within a single province of an empire; the Tirsan has authority within a single family of a kingdom. As I shall discuss, questions concerning the patriarchal theory of kingship arise in the course of comparing the rather different roles of the Tirsan and the *תרשטא* because of the overlap that this theory posits between subjects of a kingdom and children of a father. If the Tirsan is roughly akin to a king, and a king’s subjects are to be understood as his children, who is exempt from the authority represented by the Tirsan, which is also ostensibly that of “the order of nature”? Without retrojecting the objections posed to Filmer’s theory of patriarchal kingship in the *Two Treatises of Government* onto the *New Atlantis*, one may suggest that Bacon seems to have anticipated some of the concerns that thinkers such as Locke would eventually articulate at length concerning the overlap between subjects and children implicit in the patriarchal and the divine right theory of kingship.

The Tirsan’s relationship to his children is governed by state-enforced “reverence and obedience.”⁸⁴ Again, without overdoing the comparison, one may note that like the *תרשטא*, the Tirsan is given his privileges through a direct grant from a higher authority. In the case of the Tirsan, that higher authority is the “king of Bensalem,” whom I have already described as a figure suggestive of imperial or even divine authority. The Tirsan, to repeat, is not described as a subject of the king, but as his “friend and creditor.”⁸⁵ What could be a more effective parody of the notion promulgated by James I that kings are like gods, and that kings receive their privileges directly from “on high”? James is well-known for having regarded and represented himself as a figure very much like both a god and a father of many;

⁸⁴ Ibid., 61.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 62.

in his 1610 speech to Parliament, he famously announced that “Kings are not onely GODS Lieutenants vpon earth, and sit vpon GODS throne, but euen by God himselfe they are called Gods . . . Kings are also compared to Fathers of families: for a King is trewly *Parens patriae*, the politique father of his people.”⁸⁶ He also went out of his way to stress his unique access to and even his implied status as the embodiment of “the Laws of Nature.”⁸⁷

Secondly, one must consider the implications of the setting that Bacon creates for the Feast of the Family. His decision to insert the Tirsan’s wife into a traverse on a half-pace can hardly be considered trivial or accidental. In addition, as I have already observed, the description of the Tirsan’s seating arrangements are directly evocative of the arrangements described in the House of Lords Precedence Act of 1539.⁸⁸ The designation of the “Son of the Vine” suggests nothing so much as the choice of a Prince of Wales, and the quasi-liturgical acclamation given by the people was a ritual carried out at royal ceremonies (particularly accessions to the throne) with which Bacon would have been extremely familiar.⁸⁹ The Tirsan’s repeated withdrawals for private prayers are directly evocative of the king’s withdrawals to his own traverse in recorded ceremonies involving James.⁹⁰ Even the fact that the Tirsan stands up supported by two of his sons reminds that King James was “ever leaning on other men’s shoulders.”⁹¹

Thirdly, the cluster of imagery associated with Dionysos or Bacchus subtly evokes the debauchery and dissipation that were known to have characterized the Jacobean court and the drunkenness that was said to have characterized the Jacobean monarch on more than one occasion.⁹² Finally, the quotation from the

⁸⁶ *King James VI and I: Political Writings* (ed. Johann P. Sommerville; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 181.

⁸⁷ *Idem*, 63.

⁸⁸ See n. 58 of this essay. With reference to Bacon’s description of the meal service to the Tirsan (“He is served only by his own children, such as are male; who perform unto him all service of the table upon the knee”), see Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* (ed. Mary Dewar; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 88: “no man speaketh to the prince or serveth at the table but in adoration and kneeling.”

⁸⁹ See Ernst Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958) on the role of royal acclamations.

⁹⁰ See *The Old Cheque-Book, or Book of Remembrance of the Chapel Royal from 1561 to 1744* (ed. Edward F. Rimbault; New York: Da Capo Press, 1966) 151–52, for an account of a ceremony in which King James and the visiting Spanish ambassador repeatedly retreat into and emerge from the private enclosures provided by the traverses “on the half-pace” of the Chapel Royal.

⁹¹ S. J. Houston, *James I* (2d ed.; New York: Longman, 1995) 117.

⁹² On the “drunken orgies” of King James, see Lawrence Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution 1529–1642* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) 89, and Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603–1714* (New York: Norton, 1961) 68. See also the pertinent comment by Lampert, who notes the veiled allusion to Dionysos without pondering its significance beyond this sentence: “Domestication of the sexual passion tames Dionysos by incorporating Dionysos, his ivy and grape, into a bound fruitfulness that serves a foreign God and the Bensalemite state” (*Nietzsche and Modern Times*, 54). For some problems with Lampert’s assumption that the process of domestication to which he refers has been successful, see n. 95 of this essay and the references therein.

biblical patriarch Jacob that Bacon puts in the mouth of the Tirsan is not, I think, a random choice, given the hint of the Jacobean monarch it conveys. By creating the figure of the Tirsan and linking him to Adam and Noah, Bacon evokes the patriarchal and the divine right theories of kingship in order to show their absurdity but also, perhaps, their necessity. He deliberately points to the problems associated with the identification of royal, religious, and paternal authority.⁹³ If all fathers *are* in fact to be regarded as kings within the context of their own families, won't an inevitable conflict ensue between the authority of the patriarch and that of the adult sons who are fathers themselves? Why should individual fathers obey the paternal authority of the king, if their own authority is itself grounded in nature and divinely sanctioned?

While Bacon leaves open the question of why any man who has fathered thirty children should be honored and entrusted with authority by the state, one practical reason that suggests itself is that Bensalem apparently has a fairly serious population deficit.⁹⁴ Somehow the marvels of Bensalemite science have not remedied the need for more people to enjoy its blessings. This is a striking instance of the extent to which science has failed to master a problem that Bacon regarded as being of vital political importance.⁹⁵ Even if one resorts to a minimalist interpretation of the "Feast of the Family" as a political device to encourage population growth, the philosophical and the political questions about the commonality it suggests between the role of father and that of king remain. If the wisdom and authority of the father is all but wholly coterminous with that of the wisdom and authority of God himself and "the order of nature" itself, why does the "Father of the Family" have to call upon the state to put his decrees into execution? Why has the state not, in fact, withered away, given that the promise of Bensalemite science is to remedy the deficits and vagaries of nature? Since it has not withered away, we

⁹³ Some of these very problems would, of course, come to be considered by Locke in the first of his *Two Treatises of Government*.

⁹⁴ See the narrator's remark to Joabin: "For that where population is so much affected, and such as with them it seemed to be, there is commonly permission of plurality of wives" (Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 66). On the underpopulation problem in Bensalem, see Peter Pesic, "Desire, Science, and Polity: Francis Bacon's Account of Eros," *Interpretation* 26 (1999) 333–52, at 346–48, and his reference there to Brian Vickers, *Francis Bacon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁹⁵ Pesic correctly notes that "Bensalem should not have suffered underpopulation" ("Desire, Science, and Polity," 351 n. 22), but he attributes the cause to "some alteration of eros," suggesting that "so much eros goes into the Atlantean's scientific projects that sexual desire wanes and families shrink" (347). Oddly, given his acknowledgment of the problem posed by the island's underpopulation, Pesic states that "[t]he Bensalemites have acquired control over fertility" (347). The traces of hidden Dionysian excess in the Feast of the Family suggest that eros is not quite as controlled in Bensalem as Pesic implies, Joabin's disingenuously prim insistence to the contrary notwithstanding. Possibly relevant to Bacon's use of viticultural imagery in this context are the themes mentioned in the notes to the "Song of Vintage and Harvest" in Theodor H. Gaster, *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961). The assumption that Bacon is not being satirical in suggesting that chastity is held in high esteem on Bensalem needs to be subjected to further questioning.

must conclude that the state in Bensalem exists for some reason other than that of a remedy for the deficiencies of nature, or be forced to acknowledge that Bensalem does not solely represent the achieved mastery of nature.

Bacon's acute sense of the difficulty of reconciling the theological-political concept of the "order of nature" represented by the Tirsan with the modern scientific project of mastering nature is suggested by the manner in which he contrasts the portrait of the Tirsan with that of the Father of Salomon's House. These two figures are most usefully read *against* each other, and both of them, taken together and separately, should also be compared to the Christian priest who instructs the sailors in the history of Bensalem. Bacon deliberately creates parallels and contrasts among all three figures, but particularly between the two fathers, in such a way that he encourages a consideration of the different types of authority that they represent. The Christian priest and Governor of the "Stranger's House" in which the sailors stay during their visit is never called "Father." He is described as having offered "parent-like"⁹⁶ treatment and "brotherly love"⁹⁷ to the visiting Europeans, who are his self-professed "true servants."⁹⁸ If we compare the relation of the narrator to the Christian priest and to the Father of Salomon's House, we detect a movement by which he goes from being a "stranger" to being a "servant" of the former and a "son" to the latter.⁹⁹ Significantly, the Tirsan does not establish any sort of relationship with the strangers; he only interacts with the children of his own body, with his chosen friends, and presumably with agents of the state that executes his decrees. The Tirsan's personal authority is exhausted in the very exercise of it (although his decrees and orders evidently persist after the Feast is over), while that of the Father of Salomon's House is designed to last. It endures because it is transmittable through the dispersal of knowledge and because of the goal it seeks ("knowledge of Causes and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible")¹⁰⁰ can never be wholly attained.

The ceremonies honoring the Tirsan take place amongst his children inside a "large room" from which the Tirsan repeatedly retreats to make his "private prayers";¹⁰¹ the procession honoring the Father of Salomon's House occurs outside and in public, so that all the citizens of Bensalem can line the streets and watch in silence as he passes by.¹⁰² Both the Tirsan and the Father of Salomon's House sit "alone"¹⁰³ but the Tirsan's sons who "hap to be of Salomon's House" are allowed to

⁹⁶ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 45.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* Kate Aughterson notes: "At this stage [of the narrative], the parental symbol is not specifically patriarchal." "'Strange Things So Probably Told': Gender, Sexual Difference and Knowledge in Bacon's *New Atlantis*," in *Francis Bacon's New Atlantis*, 156–79, at 163.

⁹⁹ See Galatians 4:7.

¹⁰⁰ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 71.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 63 and 70.

sit with him, while the Father of Salomon's House sits all by himself in his gilded cedar chariot with "a sun of gold, radiant upon the top, in the midst," borne aloft by footmen.¹⁰⁴ Both the Tirsan and the Father of Salomon's House are invested with various symbols and appurtenances suggestive of royalty, but it is the latter to whom the narrator prostates himself in an act of *proskynesis*, "kissing the hem of his tippet" when they meet for a private audience.¹⁰⁵ It is worth noting that when the sailors had attempted to do the same to the Christian priest ("we . . . presented ourselves to kiss the skirt of his tippet"¹⁰⁶) the priest refuses to let them do so. The Tirsan receives substantial gifts from a higher authority, but he only gives out heraldic devices and tokens of fealty to a select few of his children; the Father of Salomon's House receives nothing from anyone (like the paradigmatic figure of magnanimity that he is meant to evoke) and bestows "great largesses" not only to the visiting European strangers but also, it would seem, to the inhabitants of Bensalem he encounters "where they come upon all occasions."¹⁰⁷ The decrees of the Tirsan pertain only to the children of his body, whereas the Father of Salomon's House seeks to bestow the blessings of Bensalem on all the nations of the world.¹⁰⁸ He gives his account of Salomon's House to the narrator ostensibly "for the love of God and men."¹⁰⁹

Despite the note of triumphalist parochialism in his speech to the narrator, we are meant to view the Father of Salomon's House as being basically magnanimous and loftily cosmopolitan, and, of course, he looks even more so when compared to the Father of the Family. However, given that we are to assume that the Father of Salomon's House wishes to partially ameliorate the curse of human ignorance by bestowing enlightenment on all nations, why does Bacon represent him as choosing for his vehicle of enlightenment one single European sailor? Bacon evidently had yet another contrast with the Tirsan in mind: the strength of the Tirsan depends upon the quantity of children he has, while that of the Father of Salomon's house depends heavily upon the quality of his chosen "son." Importantly, that son is "chosen by [his] fellows for the private access"¹¹⁰ rather than designated by the Father himself for such an honor. The narrator is given leave to "publish"¹¹¹ what he heard in his encounter with the Father to a general audience, but the mode of revelation leaves open the possibility that human error could mar the transcription of the account of Salomon's House. Surely a general, direct revelation of the Father's blessing to all the sailors would have been more reliable in terms of enlisting humanity in the collective effort to extend the bounds of human empire. Instead Bacon represents

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 69.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 71.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 60.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 83.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 71.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 70.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 83.

the Father as duplicating the revelation of saving knowledge to a single chosen recipient that is a central feature of the religious traditions that he mocks.

The impression that the Father of Salomon's House partakes of something akin to divinity is heightened by the fact that the Father even bears a distinct resemblance to a popular thirteenth-century apocryphal description of Jesus in the forged letter of a nonexistent individual named Publius Lentulus (supposed governor of Judea before Pontius Pilate).¹¹² The Father of Salomon's House is "a man of middle stature and age, comely of person, and had an aspect as if he pitied men. . . . His hair was like a helmet . . . and his locks curled below it decently; they were of colour brown. His beard was cut round and of the same colour with his hair."¹¹³ In the "Letter of Lentulus," Jesus is described as "a man in stature middling tall, and comely, having a reverend countenance, which those who look upon may love and fear; having hair of the hue of an unripe hazel-nut and smooth almost down to his ears, but from the ears in curling locks somewhat darker . . . [and] a full beard of the colour of his hair, not long . . . sometimes he wept, but never laughed."¹¹⁴ In terms of the possible allusion to the physical appearance of Jesus, it seems that Bacon decided to de-emphasize the aspect of Jesus that might arouse fear in those who looked upon his face, and to stress that aspect which could evoke love. However, while Bacon designed the Father of Salomon's House in such a way that he suggests a love of humanity and a working knowledge of human needs and passions, Bacon does not imply that he is endowed with humility and a comprehensive knowledge of human aspirations.

Perhaps most prominent among the passions to which the Father of Salomon's House appeals in his address is sad discontent at their lot on the part of the sailors (and of Bacon's readers?) and a sense of envy (accompanied by the desire for gain prompted by that envy) as well as a sense of competition. He also seeks to evoke wonder or at least, stupefied astonishment at the various marvels he describes. What the Father does *not* appeal to is a disinterested love of knowledge; even the end of the sentence that begins by indicating that "[t]he End of our foundation is the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things" ends with "and the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible."¹¹⁵ As has been observed by more than one scholar, the Father of Salomon's House focuses on the tangible effects of knowledge and the material comfort and power that can be derived from it rather than thoughts that are sufficient in and of themselves. If Bensalem is a kind of paradise, it is a cheerfully vulgar one, being founded on the

¹¹² On the role of the letter in iconographic representations of Jesus, see the comments of John Oliver Hand, "Salve sancta facies: Some Thoughts on the Iconography of the 'Head of Christ' by Petrus Christus," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 27 (1992) 7–18, at 10.

¹¹³ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 69.

¹¹⁴ *The Apocryphal New Testament* (ed. J. K. Elliott; Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 543. See Ernst von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1899) 308–30, esp. 318–19.

¹¹⁵ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 71.

lightly varnished appeal to people's passions and fantasies that Bacon had bitterly scorned in his earlier writings.¹¹⁶

■ Conclusion

In terms of the *New Atlantis* as a whole, it is not wholly inaccurate to suggest that Bacon is primarily concerned with neutering religion and the state as independent sources of authority and redeploying them in tandem (like the figurative equivalent of yoked prisoners in Roman triumphal processions) as elaborate bodies of support staff for the center of gathering and dispersing knowledge that is Salomon's House. However, this view is insufficient to explain why Bacon went to the elaborate lengths that he did in representing Bensalem's "reconstructed religion." It is not clear why a perfected science would still need what Bacon regarded as the salutary deceptions of religion, the coercive power of the state, and the occasional exercise of will unchecked by law represented by the Tirsan, if such a science would by definition include the mastery of human nature as part of nature itself. Mastering human nature would seem to necessarily entail doing away with the fear of the unknown aspects of nature that Bacon at his most Lucretian saw at the root of religion. By including religion in the society of Bensalem, Bacon rejects the notion that science unvarnished by what he viewed as the useful lies of religion could suffice to quell this fear. Without the copious use of religious stories, images, and ceremonies, the capacity of a not necessarily benevolent science to induce fear, rather than to eradicate it, might be all too apparent.¹¹⁷ While Bacon's composite religion gives priority to "love" over fear, Bacon does not even hint at some point in the future in which science can finally cast off the necessity of appearing to defer to religion. The theological-political problem that is given its clearest articulation in the Feast of the Family episode (particularly when taken in conjunction with Joabin's discussion of the Feast) is not "solved" by the contrary figure of the Father

¹¹⁶ See Bacon's rather scathing remarks on Natural Philosophers who seek support for their enterprise by broadcasting elaborate claims for its ability to enhance health and material comfort and to manufacture marvels, in the early piece "Thoughts and Conclusions," he writes: "[Natural Philosophy] has forfeited much of its reputation and esteem by reason of the irresponsibility and worthlessness of some of its champions. These men, partly because they are credulous and partly because they are imposters, have loaded the human race with promises such as prolongation of life, postponement of old age, relief from pain, repair of natural defects, deceptions of the senses, inhibition or excitement of the emotions, enlightenment of the intellectual faculties, exaltations of mood, transmutation of substances, multiplications of motions as desired, impressions and alterations of the air, divinations of future events, visibility of distant events, revelation of hidden things, and so on." ("Thoughts and Conclusions on the Interpretation of Nature or a Science Productive of Works," in Benjamin Farrington, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon: An Essay on Its Development From 1603 to 1609 with New Translations of Fundamental Texts*; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964) 81. This sounds very much like an abstract of the claims made in the *New Atlantis*.

¹¹⁷ On Bacon's questionable conception of scientific benevolence and charity, see Paterson, "On the Role of Christianity" and idem, "The Secular Control of Science," as well as Kennington, "Bacon's Humanitarian Revision of Machiavelli."

of Salomon's House and the institution he represents. The text of the *New Atlantis* is divided between contradictory claims to rule.

If the Father of Salomon's House does not appear to be an exact counterweight to the power of the Tirsan, it may be because Bacon tactfully refrains from directly juxtaposing their respective claims to rule as different sorts of "Fathers." The private authority of the Tirsan and the public authority of the state are joined at the point where artificially cultivated "reverence and obedience" to the father (as dictated by the "order of nature") breaks down. While he pits them against each other in an important sense, Bacon does not suggest that the Father of Salomon's House can effectively replace the Father of the Family and evoke reverence and obedience all by himself. If the latter represents the "order of nature," the former represents the mastery of nature, and nature, Bacon implies, resists mastery. The Father of the Family's fertility is celebrated because it is still understood to be exceptional in some important sense and because the state is in need of it, scientific sophistication notwithstanding. Why is his family of thirty children not the norm if science has actually succeeded in mastering nature by overcoming the problem of insufficient numbers of progeny amongst its citizens and by directly correlating an increase in the number of children with an increase in prosperity? If fertility is not an issue, and there are abundant material rewards to be reaped from participating in the feast (apparently with no attendant costs), it is not clear why there are not many Tirsans to be celebrated at the same time. We should keep in mind the important fact that the Father of Salomon's House can generate "sons" without having to go through human bodies in order to get them. In this sense, he has conquered nature; the Tirsan has not. The institutionalized ceremony that honors him would not exist if the problem of underpopulation (which is a problem posed by nature) did not exist.

The existence of the sons and daughters of the Tirsan presumably depends upon the direct involvement of human bodies, or what the narrator refers to as the "nuptial copulation" from which the "propagation of families proceedeth."¹¹⁸ If nature had been substantially mastered by science in Bensalem, the population could be replenished without having to rely upon unreliable human bodies. The Father of the Family would then be able to generate sons as does the Father of Salomon's House. We see the perdurable nature of a problem posed by nature (here, in the specific form of underpopulation) in the very heart of an island that is supposed to signify the conquest of nature by science.

My argument that Bacon's conception of the possibilities of science for relieving the human estate was a skeptical and wary one should not be taken as implying that he was plagued with misgivings about forging ahead in his program for the advancement of learning and the progress of science. He saw science as the best chance that humanity had for attaining relief from the harshness of nature unmitigated by human artifice. Bacon's subtle suggestions of the limitations of science in solving the problems presented by nature should be given as much

¹¹⁸ Bacon, *New Atlantis*, 66.

weight as his louder insistence upon the necessity of collectively attempting to do so by radically new methods in the context of new institutions. In the midst of this “new” world of science, the old institution of paternal rule (which is, Bacon suggests, bound up with the concept of divine right kingship) and the concept of an “order of nature” that it represents is not discarded, despite its foundation in tradition rather than reason. Through his scathing critique of the limitations of paternal rule, Bacon undermines its theoretical legitimacy, but he refrains from doing away with it altogether. Bacon gives no suggestion that the problem to which paternal rule offers a decidedly imperfect corrective (that problem being the absence of an ascertainable hierarchical order in nature) is diminished by the triumph of the natural sciences, in part because such sciences do not affirm the conventional “order of nature” that secured some measure of reverence and voluntary obedience in the first place.¹¹⁹ Modern natural science cannot recur to a classical, Jewish or Christian concept of natural order to support its claim to rule, but it can (and Bacon suggests, it must) recur to a pointedly vague concept of supernatural order and benevolence, at least on a rhetorical level.¹²⁰ The *New Atlantis* fails to look with favor on the prospect of universal enlightenment. Perhaps the most potent sign of the chastened and constrained nature of Bacon’s utopianism is that while holding out the ambiguous promise of the fruits of knowledge, the *New Atlantis* does not advocate the widespread diffusion of their source or seek to awaken an appetite for abstract knowledge among people not already subject to such cravings.

¹¹⁹ Elsewhere in his work, especially in “The Case of the Post-Nati of Scotland,” *Works of Francis Bacon*, 7:641–79, Bacon suggests the centrality of the concept of natural order to his explicitly political thought on the nature of monarchies (which should not, of course, be collapsed with his philosophy): “It is evident that all . . . commonwealths, monarchies only excepted do subsist by a law precedent. For where authority is divided amongst many officers, and they not perpetual, but annual or temporary, and not to receive their authority but by election, and certain persons to have voice only to that election, and the like; these are busy and curious frames, which of necessity do suppose a law precedent, written or unwritten, to guide and direct them; but in monarchies, especially hereditary . . . the submission is more natural and simple; which afterwards by laws subsequent is perfected and made more formal, but is grounded upon nature.

That this is so appeareth notably in two things; the one the platforms and patterns which are found in the natures of monarchies. . . . The platforms are three.

The first is that of a father, or chief of a family; who governing over his wife by prerogative of sex, over his children by prerogative of age, and because he is author unto them of being . . . is the very model of a king. So is the opinion of Aristotle, lib. iii *Pol.* Cap. 14. . . . And therefore Lycurgus, when one counselled him to dissolve the kingdom, and to establish another form of estate, answered, ‘Sir, begin to do that which you advise first at home in your own house:’ noting, that the chief of a family is as a king; and that those that can least endure kings abroad, can be content to be kings at home. And this is the first platform, which we see is merely natural” (“The Case of the Post-Nati,” 643–44).

¹²⁰ On Jewish conceptions of the relation between a divinely instituted order of nature for human beings and the natural order in the “nonhuman realm,” see David Novak, *Natural Law in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) esp. 38–39. On the normative concept of the natural order in the Christian tradition of natural law, see Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004).

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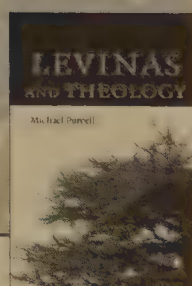
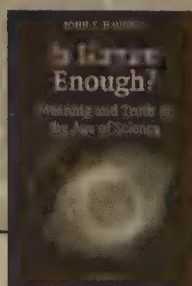
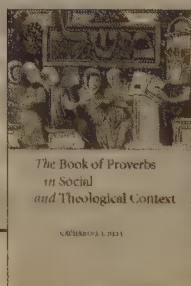
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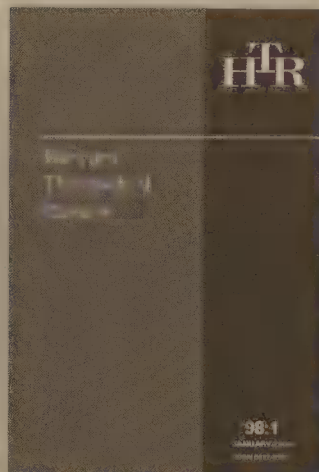


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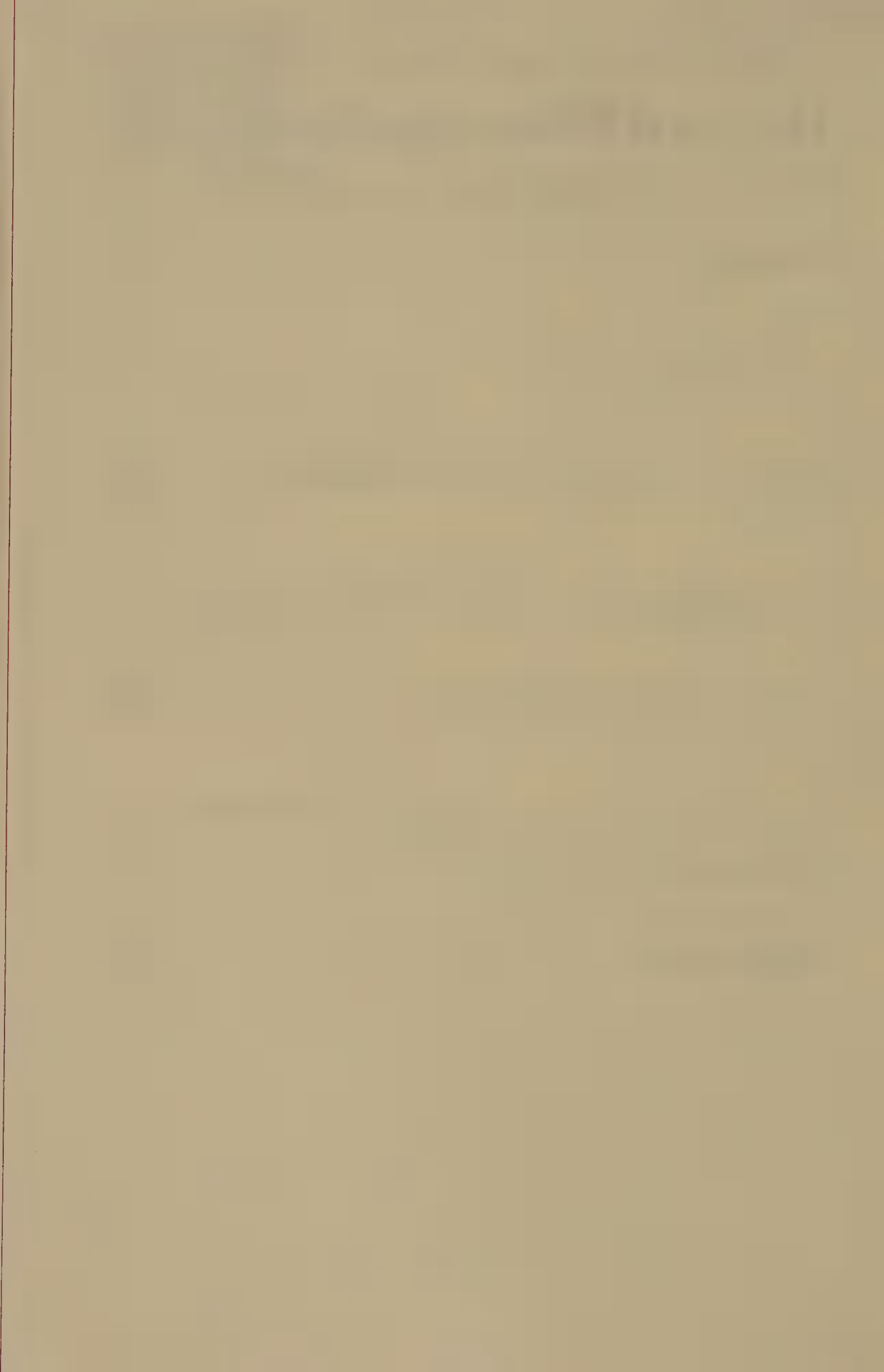
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Schleiermacher's Treatise on Grace*

Julia A. Lamm

Georgetown University

■ Introduction

The title of this essay is meant to be perplexing. Schleiermacher is not known for his treatment of grace, much less for a treatise on grace. Few scholars of Schleiermacher's theology have devoted attention to his doctrine of grace, with two notable exceptions. Karl Barth, in his lectures on Schleiermacher, did not hesitate to thrash his nemesis on this point, although to him it was so obvious that Schleiermacher's understanding of grace was not a Christian doctrine of grace, at least not in the Reformation sense, that he barely felt the need to argue the case. "What kind of God is this," he asked, "What kind of grace?"¹ Richard R. Niebuhr, in his *apologia* for Schleiermacher, which inspired a new age of scholarship on Schleiermacher in America, included a section entitled "Grace and Nature," but its focus was on the *Christmas Eve Dialogue*, not Schleiermacher's dogmatic theology.² Neither Barth nor Niebuhr took note of Schleiermacher's more formal, dogmatic

*The seeds of this essay were planted in two courses I taught at Harvard Divinity School as a visiting professor in 2004; I am most grateful to my students from that Spring semester and to my academic hosts. My gratitude extends to Georgetown University, as well, for providing me with a summer research grant in 2006. Richard Crouter, Dawn DeVries, Brent Sockness, Ted Vial, Walt Wyman, and two readers for *HTR* all offered invaluable criticisms which, I hope, have made this a stronger piece.

¹ Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen, Winter Semester of 1923/24* (ed. Dietrich Ritschl; trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982) 26. Barth asked this in reference to Schleiermacher's sermons. Later, turning his attention to the Glaubenslehre, he claimed, "The antithesis [between sin and grace] of his second part is a psychological one and therefore it falls short of the Christian antithesis at least in the New Testament and Reformation sense. This is what holds his system together" (ibid., 197).

² See Richard R. Niebuhr, *Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion: A New Introduction* (New York: Scribner's, 1964) 43–59. Niebuhr's other, brief references to grace occur in discussions of Schleiermacher's doctrines of divine good pleasure and election, neither of which, as we shall see, is what Schleiermacher understood by grace.

treatment of grace—what I am calling Schleiermacher’s “treatise on grace”; in the several decades since their influential works, very few have attempted to correct this oversight.³ Such neglect by specialists has no doubt contributed to a wider sense that, despite the importance of his *The Christian Faith (Glaubenslehre)*,⁴ Schleiermacher does not merit a place alongside other theologians when it comes to the history of the Christian doctrine of grace. None of the major scholarly books on the history and development of the doctrine of grace include a chapter or section (or even reference) to Schleiermacher’s treatment of grace. Schleiermacher himself almost seems to have anticipated this oversight—worse, really, than any criticism—when he asked, “Does my *Glaubenslehre* in any way fail to give due honor to divine grace?”⁵

The main purpose of this essay is to argue a straightforward but not obvious thesis: *Contained in the Glaubenslehre is a treatise on grace—that is to say, a delineated text that treats the subject of grace in a formal, methodical, and thorough manner—and, furthermore, this treatise is of fundamental importance to Schleiermacher’s dogmatic system.* In coherence and scope, Schleiermacher’s

³ Most books on Schleiermacher treat his philosophy of religion and theory of consciousness, his doctrine of God, or his Christology. In their recent essay, entitled “Providence and Grace: Schleiermacher on Justification and Election,” Dawn DeVries and B. A. Gerrish have also noted the dearth of literature on Schleiermacher’s doctrine of grace; their own essay marks an important contribution, but because they had been commissioned to cover so much, they chose to focus on one aspect of the treatise on grace, namely, justification (in *The Cambridge Companion to Schleiermacher* [ed. Jacqueline Mariña; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005] 189–207). Richard Crouter has also examined one aspect of the “treatise,” repentance, in “More than Kindred Spirits: Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher on Repentance,” in *Schleiermacher und Kierkegaard. Subjektivität und Wahrheit / Subjectivity and Truth. Akten des Schleiermacher-Kierkegaard-Kongresses in Kopenhagen, Oktober 2003* (ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, et al.; Berlin: Gruyter, 2006) 673–85. Another noteworthy exception is Emilio Brito, S.J., “Nature, Supernature, Grâce chez Schleiermacher” (*Science et Esprit* 43/3 [1991] 251–81); this is a rare example of a serious treatment of the topic. George N. Boyd’s article, “The Medium is the Message: A Revisionist Reading of Augustine’s Experience of Grace According to Schleiermacher and McLuhan” (*Anglican Theological Review* 56 [1974] 189–201) is superficial in its treatment of Schleiermacher.

⁴ *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt* (2 vols; 2d ed.; Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1830/31). In *Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 1:13/1–2 (ed. Rolf Schäfer; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), hereafter, *KGA*. English translation: *The Christian Faith*, by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: Clark, 1928; first paperback edition, with a new foreword by B. A. Gerrish [New York: T&T Clark, 1999]). Whenever possible, Mackintosh and Stewart’s translation will be used, but in many cases their translations prove inadequate, in which case I shall provide my own. Citations of the *Glaubenslehre* will refer to proposition and paragraph number and then to page number in *The Christian Faith* (e.g., §108.1; *CF* 481); where translations are mine, citations will refer to page number in the *KGA* (1:13/2), with cross-reference to *The Christian Faith* (e.g., §108.1; *KGA* 172; see *CF* 481).

⁵ Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre: Two Letters to Dr. Lücke* (trans. James Duke and Francis Fiorenza; American Academy of Religion Texts and Translations Series 3; Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1981) 50.

treatise is comparable to other, more famous systematic treatments of grace,⁶ and it is especially worthy of attention because it is the first modern systematic treatment of grace. In navigating his way through classical disputes about grace, Schleiermacher tried to formulate an authentically Protestant (“evangelical”) doctrine that respects the natural and historical sciences.⁷ Moreover, this treatise is fundamental to Schleiermacher’s mature theology in that it is one of two pillars on which his entire *Glaubenslehre* is erected (the other pillar being his propositions on Christ), so that his dogmatics cannot be properly understood without careful attention to it. In that sense, the *Glaubenslehre* could be said to be a *Gnadenlehre*, since everything in it is an explication of the Christian experience of having been redeemed by Christ, which is an experience of grace. It is also true, however, that Schleiermacher’s doctrine of grace is carefully circumscribed. What is not treated within the bounds of his treatise on grace (e.g., preservation, providence, and election) is not, strictly speaking, grace.⁸ Hence, my point in entitling this essay “Schleiermacher’s Treatise on Grace” is at least as substantive as it is rhetorical.

A second thesis will undoubtedly prove more controversial: *Although Schleiermacher’s treatise on grace is couched in polemical, anti-Catholic terms,⁹ in actuality it is not antithetical to Catholic views of grace, at least not in the usual ways.* My point here is not that Schleiermacher was a crypto-Catholic; aside from being untrue, such a claim would undermine my argument. The point is rather that Schleiermacher showed signs of frustration with how the terms of the debate had almost always been framed in the history of Christian thought, so in his treatise

⁶ Two examples come quickly to mind: Thomas Aquinas’s treatise on grace in the *Summa theologiae* (First Part of the Second Part, Questions 109–14) and Jonathan Edward’s “Treatise on Grace,” in *Treatise on Grace and other posthumously published writings* (ed. Paul Helm; Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1971).

⁷ For more on Schleiermacher’s understanding of the task of theology in a modern context and of the development of doctrine, see B. A. Gerrish, “Continuity and Change: Friedrich Schleiermacher on the Task of Theology,” Chapter 1 in *Tradition and the Modern World: Reformed Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) 13–48; and John E. Thiel, *Imagination and Authority: Theological Authorship in the Modern Tradition* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1991) 33–62.

⁸ This then serves as an important correction to Niebuhr. See note 2 above.

⁹ Walt Wyman, in his recent penetrating study, “The Role of the Protestant Confessions in *The Christian Faith*,” notes a shift in Schleiermacher’s procedure in the propositions on regeneration and sanctification, which he attributes to such polemics: “[W]ith the section on regeneration Schleiermacher takes up the topics that were the subject of disputes between Catholics and Protestants. Thus here the confessions come into their own as evidence of the distinctively Protestant religious experiences and beliefs, and the Protestant-Catholic contrast plays an explicit role” (*The Journal of Religion* 87 [2007] 377). B. A. Gerrish also notes how important such polemics were for Schleiermacher’s self-understanding as a Protestant theologian. Schleiermacher, he writes, “believed that the Protestant reform had established the church situation in which his own age still lived, and that Evangelical theology could still be pursued only as the Protestant theologian took his stand, with the Reformers, in opposition to Roman Catholicism” (“Schleiermacher and the Reformation: A Question of Doctrinal Development,” Chapter 11 in *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982] 180).

on grace he reframed the issues, in sometimes subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle ways. Despite his own rhetoric, he stepped outside of Protestant-Catholic polemics and developed a Christian doctrine of grace striking in its simplicity and freshness, whatever disagreements one may have with it. Authentically and recognizably Protestant, it nevertheless resonates with certain traditionally Catholic emphases. In reframing the terms of the debate and transcending the polemics, Schleiermacher's doctrine of grace in some ways anticipated the rapprochement between Catholic and Protestant theologians with respect to grace beginning in the 1960's.¹⁰ At the same time, it is also true that Schleiermacher so reframed the *Fragestellung* regarding grace—for instance, by removing the Holy Spirit from the workings of grace—that many Protestants and Catholics alike will find much that is foreign in Schleiermacher and so may well be united in their suspicions of him.¹¹

¹⁰ The polemics between Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians over grace and justification remained fierce through the 1960s. Groundwork for rapprochement, or at the very least for a willingness to step outside entrenched ideological frameworks, was laid on the Protestant side by, for instance, Paul Tillich and his positive assessment of what he called "Catholic Substance" (see Julia A. Lamm, "'Catholic Substance' Revisited: Reversals of Expectations in Tillich's Doctrine of God," in *Paul Tillich: A New Catholic Assessment* [ed. Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1994] 48–72) and by the careful historical work of B. A. Gerrish (*Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1962]). On the Catholic side, the groundwork was laid by Hans Küng, who wrote a nonpolemical dissertation on Karl Barth's understanding of justification (*Rechtfertigung. Die Lehre Karl Barths und eine katholische Besinnung*; Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957) and later by Karl Rahner and other Catholic theologians inspired by the ecumenical message of Vatican II. In 1965, Eugene TeSelle, a Protestant theologian, tried to explain the differences between Catholic and Protestant views of grace in a nonpolemical way: whereas "it is usual in Protestant theology to speak of grace as the free and unmerited activity of God for the benefit of the sinner, overcoming his bondage to sin and restoring him to the life for which he was originally destined" (238), at least one strand of Catholic theology "has insisted that grace is not exhausted by its function of overcoming sin. God is gracious not only to man as sinner but also to man as man. Even apart from sin it is proper to speak of grace, in that man is brought into a relationship with God which is not an inherent possibility of man himself but is only made possible by God's self-communication" ("The Problems of Nature and Grace," *The Journal of Religion* 45 [1965] 238). In another essay, TeSelle formulated this chief difference in terms of nature and grace: "Nature and grace presents a singular problem for ecumenical discussion, for it is perhaps the only theological topic in which Catholic and Protestant thought have gone their own ways. . . . The Reformers and their successors were aware, to be sure, of the distinction between nature and grace: they even affirmed it explicitly; but it was not of central concern to them. By contrast, nature and grace became perhaps the central topic of intramural controversy in post-Tridentine Catholic theology" ("Nature and Grace in the Forum of Ecumenical Discussion," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 8 [1971] 540).

¹¹ There are additional reasons why Schleiermacher's understanding of grace does not fit easily within the usual categories and polemics. There is, of course, his insistence that divine causality ought never be understood as usurping the natural causal system, even when it comes to grace and justification, which poses a challenge to the entire Western tradition and so creates some new fault lines. But there are other, less obvious reasons, too. For instance, the scriptural texts he draws on as inspiration are not the ones that had been bones of contention between Catholics and Protestants. Also, his doctrine of grace reflects his own experience of grace, which was steeped in his Pietist background, and Pietism does not fit easily within typical Catholic-Protestant polemics.

A third thesis helps to explain the second: *Schleiermacher's doctrine of grace is based on an analogy* (Parellele, Analogie) *that he draws between grace and the incarnation*. His entire treatise on grace can be read as an explication of the parallels he sees, on the one hand, between conversion and the "act of union" (the incarnation) and, on the other hand, between sanctification and the "state of the union" (the association of the two natures throughout Christ's lifetime; see arrows in Table 1.) Or, as he so compellingly put it, the communication of grace is an extension of the incarnation to all humanity. Schleiermacher's *incarnational view of grace* should capture our attention. It is startling that it has been overlooked.

What I propose to do in this essay is therefore to identify Schleiermacher's "treatise on grace" and to offer an analysis of it as a *treatise*—that is to say, on its own and not as an intricate component of Schleiermacher's dogmatic system. The latter task will require some discipline, since there will always be a temptation to explain certain points in terms of the rest of the system. Under "Preliminary Considerations," I locate the treatise within the larger work and draw on whatever external material might be helpful for understanding Schleiermacher's method. Under "Analysis of the Treatise," I focus exclusively on the treatise itself, using notes when necessary to refer to other parts of the *Glaubenslehre*. Readers wishing to go straight to the heart of the matter may choose to proceed directly to the "Analysis."

Since a thorough analysis of Schleiermacher's treatise on grace would exceed the bounds of a published article, I shall limit my present argument by taking my cues in part from Schleiermacher. I shall devote most of my attention to his discussion of conversion in §108, since it is there that he addresses traditional terminology about grace, sets parameters, and establishes basic commitments. I shall then move directly from conversion to his discussion of sanctification and good works in §112, where he picks up an important thread dropped at the end of §108. This approach will underscore Schleiermacher's insistence that there is no interval between the moment of conversion and the gracious state of the redeemed. I shall omit, except for passing references, his discussion of justification by faith in §109. I do so not because it is unimportant to Schleiermacher (on the contrary!) but because I have already explored it in depth elsewhere.¹² The present task is to establish that Schleiermacher has a treatise on grace and to highlight its importance and richness by tracing a particular line of argument concerning the "natural activity" of the individual during conversion. This essay is, then, the first installment of a larger project and, hopefully, the beginning of a larger conversation.

¹² See Julia A. Lamm, *The Living God: Schleiermacher's Theological Appropriation of Spinoza* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 201–12.

■ Preliminary Considerations

The Place of the Treatise on Grace in the Structure of the Glaubenslehre

To say that the structure of the *Glaubenslehre* is complex is an understatement, and yet, because it is so bound up with Schleiermacher's method, understanding it can provide a powerful interpretive key for understanding Schleiermacher's theology.¹³ The second part of the *Glaubenslehre* is entitled "Explication of the Facts of the Religious Self-Consciousness, as they are determined by the Antithesis of Sin and Grace."¹⁴ Since Schleiermacher identifies Part Two as the heart of the entire dogmatics and describes Part One (creation, preservation, and the original perfection of the world) as an abstraction from the experience of having been redeemed by Christ, it follows that the second aspect of Part Two ("explication of the consciousness of grace") is, structurally speaking, the center and foundation of his dogmatics;¹⁵ methodologically speaking, it is the departure point. We can take this even further if we remember the priority Schleiermacher accords to the first form of proposition—namely, "the state of the Christian as conscious of the divine grace."¹⁶ The other two forms of proposition—conceptions of divine attributes and utterances about the world—"are permissible only in so far as they can be developed out of propositions of the first form."¹⁷

This leaves us with two candidates for the most elemental, most central doctrinal *locus* of the *Glaubenslehre*: the "division" on Christ (§§92–105) and the "division" on grace (§§106–112; see Table 1). Schleiermacher appears to argue for the historical, logical, and objective priority of the former.¹⁸ Yet, regarding his division on Christ, he also notes, "This exposition is *based entirely on the inner experience* of the believer; its only purpose is to describe and elucidate that experience."¹⁹ Schleiermacher describes that inner experience in the division on grace, or what he rather clumsily calls, "The manner in which fellowship with the perfection and blessedness of the Redeemer expresses itself in the individual soul."²⁰ In summary, we have two irreducible, correlative *loci* that form the heart of the heart (structurally

¹³ The intricacy of his structure, however important to understanding his dogmatics, can also inhibit understanding. Schleiermacher's treatise on grace constitutes the second division of the first section of the second aspect of the second part of his dogmatic system.

¹⁴ Heading for Part 2 of *The Christian Faith*; CF 259.

¹⁵ See Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre*, 59–60.

¹⁶ Section heading, CF 371.

¹⁷ §30.2; CF 126. In his second letter to Lücke, Schleiermacher even says that these "latter two forms are strictly speaking superfluous" (*On the Glaubenslehre*, 71).

¹⁸ "We must first explain how in virtue of this consciousness we conceive the Redeemer, next how we conceive the redeemed. The order fixes itself, for whatever in the state of the Christian contrasts with his former state in the fellowship of sinfulness can only be explained by the influence of the Redeemer. Hence the content of this section falls into two divisions" (§91.1; CF 372).

¹⁹ §100.3; CF 428, emphases added.

²⁰ Division heading; CF 476.

and methodologically) of the *Glaubenslehre*. Of those two *loci*, one—the division on grace—has been seriously neglected in the secondary literature.

Table 1: The Divisions on Christ and Grace: The Two Most Elemental Dogmatic Loci of the *Glaubenslehre*

First division: Christ	Second division: Grace
§93–94: First doctrine: the person of Christ	§107: First doctrine: Regeneration
§96: First theorem (divine and human in Christ)	§108: First theorem: Conversion
§97: Second theorem	§109: Second theorem: Justification
▪ <i>act of union</i> : divine active, human passive	
▪ <i>state of union</i> : common activity	
§98: Third theorem (Christ's essential sinlessness and absolute perfection)	
§§100–101: Second doctrine: the work of Christ	§110: Second doctrine: Sanctification
§103: First theorem: Prophetic Office	§111: First theorem: Sins of the Regenerate
§104: Second theorem: Priestly Office	§112: Second theorem: Good Works of the Regenerate
§105: Third theorem: Kingly Office	

The “division” on grace (§§106–112) is, I maintain, nothing short of a treatise on grace. I mean by “treatise” the first definition offered in the Oxford English Dictionary: “A book or writing which treats of some particular subject; commonly (in mod. use always), one containing a formal or methodical discussion or exposition of the principles of the subject.” In §§106–112, Schleiermacher does all this with regard to grace. He treats, in a systematic and thorough manner, the issues traditionally bound up with the doctrine of grace: the nature of grace; kinds of grace; modes in which grace is given and received; forgiveness and repentance; the nature of conversion and a person’s state before, during, and after conversion; whether we can prepare ourselves by “doing what is within us”; the nature of faith; the relation of human freedom and divine power; the justification of the ungodly; the attitude and works of the graced Christian; whether we can merit further grace; etc.

Definitions of grace

Since many of Schleiermacher's definitions of grace are given outside the treatise itself, it is appropriate to include an overview of them in this section on "preliminary considerations." In §63, which serves as an introduction to Part Two, Schleiermacher offers a succinct definition of grace as fellowship with God, which depends on a communication from the Redeemer. Along the way, he offers several other brief definitions of grace. Grace is Christ's "gift" [*Gabe*] to us of his own "blessing" and "peace,"²¹ the fruit of his all-powerful God-consciousness. Grace is the "state of union" with Christ, "the real possession of blessedness in the consciousness that Christ in us is the centre of our life."²² Grace takes away misery—specifically, the misery of sin.²³ Grace is the "divine life in us,"²⁴ a "specific divine impartation."²⁵ Grace for Schleiermacher is nothing less than our very redemption through Christ.²⁶

All of these can be gathered within the basic definition given in §91: "*We have fellowship with God only in a living fellowship with the Redeemer*, such that in it His absolutely sinless perfection and blessedness represent a free spontaneous activity, while the recipient's need of redemption represents a free assimilative receptivity [*Empfänglichkeit*]."²⁷ While the first clause in this definition (given in italics) is clear enough, the second two clauses would most likely require a considerable amount of explication before gaining the assent of most Christians.²⁸ Besides, while this definition could serve very well as a guide to Schleiermacher's understanding of redemption, it does not adequately express what grace is for him.

The essence of his understanding of grace is rather to be found in an analogy he arrives at and then returns to repeatedly. The grace of regeneration is "to be regarded as extending the union of the divine with the human nature."²⁹ In other words, according to Schleiermacher, grace arises immediately out of, and is the continuation of, the incarnation. *Conversion*, as the beginning of fellowship with

²¹ §101.2; *CF* 433. See also §89.3; *CF* 368.

²² §101.2; *CF* 433.

²³ See §86.2; *CF* 356.

²⁴ §108.6; *CF* 495.

²⁵ §80.1; *CF* 327.

²⁶ Schleiermacher is consistent in limiting grace to Christ's redemptive and reconciling activity, which comes from the being of God in him (rather than being the consequence of his suffering and death; see below, note 151). For him, grace is not the operation or the gift of the Holy Spirit, nor is it understood more generally as divine presence, power, and activity. He writes, "But, for the Christian, nothing belongs to the consciousness of grace unless it is traced to the Redeemer as its cause, and therefore it must always be a different thing in His case from what it is in the case of others—naturally, since it is bound up with something else, namely, the peculiar redemptive activity of Christ" (§100.3; *CF* 431).

²⁷ §91; *CF* 371, emphases added.

²⁸ Schleiermacher claims that this is "the basic consciousness that each Christian has of his own state of grace, even where the most dissimilar views of Christianity prevail" (§91.1; *CF* 371).

²⁹ §120.2; *CF* 553. See also §110.3; *CF* 509.

Christ and a new relation to God, is explained along the same lines as the account of the supernatural origin of Christ's life: it is a new creation due solely to divine activity. (*Justification* is "the temporal and particularized continuation of the general act of union begun in the incarnation of Christ."³⁰) Similarly, *sanctification*, as the life of grace, is explained along the same lines as the state of the union of the divine and human in Christ: it is the divine preservation.³¹

The Mystical Approach

It follows from this basic analogy between the incarnation and grace that Schleiermacher's concerns in his discussion of grace would be much the same as those that he voiced in the development of his Christology. While some of those concerns are age-old, others are distinctly modern in that they reflect the new historical consciousness of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. In describing the person of Christ, Schleiermacher has to find a way to affirm the full humanity of Christ at the same time that he finds expression for the divine in Christ, and he has to do so in a way compatible with modern science, not only with the laws of the natural sciences but also, and most particularly, with the laws of history. What Christ shares with all other human beings is the "pure historicity" of his person.³² This means that real development—linguistic, psychological, intellectual, and personal—must be accorded to Jesus.³³ The difference between Jesus and the rest of humanity, what makes him unique and unsurpassable, is that he had "an absolutely powerful God-consciousness."³⁴ Schleiermacher explains this in terms of Christ's supernatural origin, which was a unique act of creation. Steering a course between the absolutely supernatural and the strictly natural, he characterizes "the entrance of the Redeemer into the world" as "the relatively supernatural."³⁵ Schleiermacher somewhat fleetingly explains, "the beginning of His life was also a *new implanting of the God-consciousness which creates receptivity* [*Empfänglichkeit*] in human nature; hence this content and that manner of origin are in such a close relation that they mutually condition and explain each other."³⁶ This notion of receptivity (*Empfänglichkeit*) is, as we shall see, central to his understanding of grace: it is the same term he uses to describe the state of a person undergoing conversion.

In describing the work of Christ, Schleiermacher is likewise very careful to maintain and respect the historicity of the communication of grace at the same time that he accounts for its divine origin. In two key propositions on Christ's redemptive

³⁰ §120.2; *CF* 553.

³¹ See §100.2; *CF* 426. For more on Schleiermacher's doctrine of creation and its relation to preservation, see Lamm, *The Living God*, 136–43.

³² §93.3; *CF* 382.

³³ See, e.g., §93.3 (*CF* 381), §93.4 (*CF* 383), and §94.3 (*CF* 388).

³⁴ §94.1; *CF* 387.

³⁵ §94.3; *CF* 388. See also §93.3 (*CF* 381), §101.3 (*CF* 434), and §100.3 (*CF* 429).

³⁶ §94.3; *CF* 389, emphases added.

activity (§100) and Christ's reconciling activity (§101), he introduces what he refers to, interestingly, as his "mystical" approach.³⁷ This is the same approach that Schleiermacher will take in his treatise on grace, since these two ideas—the redeeming activity of Christ and how fellowship with Christ "expresses itself in the individual soul"—are really two sides of the same coin, so to speak. The mystical approach steers a course between, on the one side, "magical" views of Christ's redeeming activity (which fail to account for natural and historical causality), and, on the other side, "empirical" views (which reduce Christ's influence to "forms of teaching and example"³⁸ and thus reduce grace to natural and historical causality, so that grace is no longer grace). In his introduction to the divisions on Christ and grace, he summarizes his position (note the tight parallel between the incarnation and conversion):

To sum up: in this whole matter we posit, on the one side, an initial divine activity which is supernatural, but at the same time a vital human receptivity [*Empfänglichkeit*] in virtue of which alone that supernatural can become a natural fact of history. . . . And so, in this whole context, the appearance of the Redeemer in the midst of this natural development is no longer a supernatural emergence of a new stage of development, *but simply one conditioned by that which precedes*—though certainly its connexion with the former is to be found only in the unity of the divine thought.³⁹

Grace, too, is to be understood as something genuinely new—a new creation, a new birth—that nonetheless comes from that which precedes it.

■ Analysis of the Treatise on Grace

The Structure and Language of the Treatise

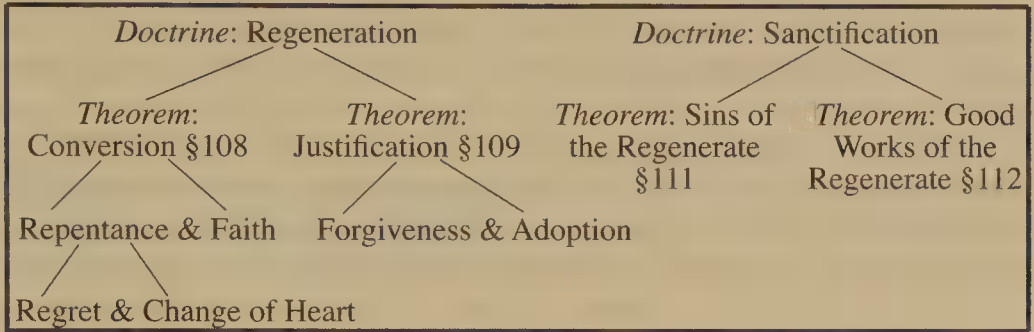
Schleiermacher's treatise on grace comprises two main doctrines (*Lehrstück*), regeneration and sanctification, each of which comprises two theorems (*Lehrsatz*; see Table 2, below).

³⁷ This is an interesting choice of words because, as he himself acknowledges, it would seem to undermine his task of writing a dogmatic theology that observes the limits set by the modern natural and historical sciences. He explains his choice nonetheless: "The expression is so extremely vague that it seems better to avoid it. But if we are willing to keep so close to its original use as to understand by it what belongs to the circle of doctrines which only a few share, but for others are a mystery, then we may accept it. Provided that we recognize that no one can be received into this circle arbitrarily, because doctrines are only expressions of inward experiences" (§100.3; *CF* 429. See also §101.3; *CF* 434–35).

³⁸ §100.3; *CF* 430.

³⁹ §88.4; *CF* 365, emphases added.

Table 2: The “Treatise on Grace”



The first point to note about the structure of the treatise is that it is not meant to reflect an *ordo salutis* (order of salvation). Schleiermacher was keenly aware that some of the fiercest debates over grace had to do with claims regarding the *ordo salutis*. He was also faced with the problem of the great diversity, hence inconsistency, of positions on this matter in the various confessions and textbooks. Hoping, especially in light of his advocacy of a united Prussian evangelical church,⁴⁰ to overcome intra-Protestant polemics, and desiring also a conceptual clarity that is not overly determinate, Schleiermacher sought other organizing principles. Those principles were experiential, dogmatic, and systematic in character.

The second point to note is that, for Schleiermacher, more important than how the key elements of grace are ordered is their “symmetrical interlocking.”⁴¹ His concern was that the continuity of the experience of grace, which itself reflects the continuity of divine redemptive activity, be reflected in his dogmatic exposition. Take as an example his treatment of the two main doctrines, regeneration and sanctification. He insisted that they are continuous—indeed, inseparable—in experience. Yet, for the purpose of exposition, they must be treated separately: “Thus, even though treating regeneration and sanctification more or less separately, we begin by bringing out their necessary interconnexion, and the continuity of the divine action through the whole course of the new creation.”⁴² If, due to their “symmetrical interlocking,” it does not really matter which doctrine comes first, why did Schleiermacher start with regeneration? One reason was his desire to carry forth consistently the analogy to the incarnation.⁴³ Another reason was stylistic:

⁴⁰ For more on the context in which the *Glaubenslehre* was written, in particular Schleiermacher’s interest in supporting the Union of the Reformed and Luther Churches of Prussia (1817), see Wyman, “The Role of the Protestant Confessions,” 357–63; Kurt Nowak, *Schleiermacher: Leben, Werk und Wirkung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001) 356–71; and *Friedrich Schleiermacher On Creeds, Confessions and Church Union: That They May Be One* (trans. Iain G. Nicol; Lewiston: Mellen, 2004).

⁴¹ §106.2; CF 477.

⁴² §108.2; CF 483.

⁴³ “[W]e may add that these two conceptions, regeneration and sanctification, set forth just the same distinction as between the act of uniting and the state of union” (§106.1; CF 477).

he believed that smooth transitions were essential. Since regeneration has to do with the turning point of the individual, it ties in better with the previous section at the same time that it anticipates the next.⁴⁴ In other words, placing regeneration first in his dogmatics enhances the systematic presentation, thus lending it further coherence and clarity.

Similarly, the two elements of regeneration—namely, conversion and justification—are “utterly inseparable,” and indeed “must also be regarded as happening simultaneously.”⁴⁵ Conversion comprises repentance and faith; justification comprises forgiveness and adoption. Again, Schleiermacher insists that “the order seems, in view of the symmetry of the definition, a matter of entire indifference; many considerations, however, make it more convenient to begin with conversion.”⁴⁶ It is instructive to take a step back and look at what his ordering achieves (see Table 2). Justification, which Schleiermacher describes as belonging to the “realm of power” rather than to the “realm of grace,”⁴⁷ occupies an important space between conversion and sanctification, distinct yet inseparable from both and also a connecting point between them. Structurally, at least, the justification of the ungodly is, as Calvin put it, “the main hinge on which religion turns.”⁴⁸ Conversion belongs to the realm of grace because it has to do specifically with Christ turning the individual.

Conversion (§108)

Conversion, the beginning of the new life in fellowship with Christ, makes itself known in each individual by *Repentance* [*Buße*], which consists in the combination of regret [*Reue*] and change of heart [*Sinnesänderung*]; and by *Faith* [*Glauben*], which consists in the appropriation of the perfection and blessedness of Christ. (§108)

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! (2 Cor 5:17)⁴⁹

⁴⁴ “The treatment of the theme has therefore both a backward reference to the previous division of the subject and an anticipation of the main lines of the next Section” (§106.2; *CF* 478). This principle of constructing a systematic presentation reflects inversely his principles of interpretation in determining the order of Plato’s dialogues (see Julia A. Lamm, “The Art of Interpreting Plato,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schleiermacher*, 91–108).

⁴⁵ §107.1; *CF* 479.

⁴⁶ §107.2; *CF* 480.

⁴⁷ “For the decision as to *who* is to attain to conversion and *when* we have already assigned, not to the realm of grace, making it depend on Christ, but to the realms of power, making it depend on God, which is the Father’s drawing [people] to the Son” (§109.3; *CF* 500–1).

⁴⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) 1:726.

⁴⁹ All translations of scriptural passages are from the *New Revised Standard Version*.

The *Leitmotiv* for Schleiermacher's exposition of regeneration is 2 Cor 5:17.⁵⁰ In particular, it informs his treatment of conversion, where his primary concern is to explicate the end of the old life and the beginning of the new, and how that occurs. The term "conversion," in his view, best captures this turning, this reversal. It has two essential moments—*repentance* and *faith*—which, once again, are so interconnected as to be inseparable; together, they should be considered as "covering the whole experience of conversion."⁵¹ He needs, however, to explain this organization of terms, both because it appears to be a departure from the Protestant confessions and because it results in a noteworthy simplification of terminology about grace.

Schleiermacher begins his discussion of conversion by quoting some of the most authoritative Protestant confessions. It is significant that, rather than simply citing them in a note, he includes quotations from the Augsburg Confession (1530), the Defense of the Augsburg Confession (1530–1531), and the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), as well as from Philip Melancthon, in the body of his text, just after the main proposition.⁵² In doing so, he clearly aligns himself with classical Protestant teaching on conversion. Schleiermacher acknowledges that his account does not "appear" to conform to the Protestant confessions, but he nevertheless insists, "The general result is identical with our own statement."⁵³ What is more, in his formulation he seeks to correct some of the divergences and inconsistencies in the various confessions; indeed, he uses those very divergences in terminology to justify his own rendition. *Despite his protestations to the contrary, his organization of the terms is, in fact, an implicit but unmistakable critique of classical Protestant formulations of repentance and faith.* Schleiermacher's exposition of conversion adjusts the tone of the classical Protestant accounts. He amplifies the more positive aspects of the experience of conversion and minimizes the more negative, crisis-oriented aspects.

Schleiermacher includes both repentance and faith, rather than repentance (*pœnitentia*) alone, under the rubric of conversion, since repentance "has no definite reference to the actual beginning of a new form of life, and also because it sounds very awkward to hear faith (a word that we obviously use in exactly the same sense of the Confessions) reckoned as a part of repentance."⁵⁴ He wants, in other words,

⁵⁰ See §106.1; *CF* 476, note.

⁵¹ §108.2; *CF* 483.

⁵² Wyman finds that "Where the quotations from the confessions actually appear in the course of any particular discussion in the *Glaubenslehre* is significant" ("The Role of the Protestant Confessions," 367). In this particular case, the placement is significant because in appealing to two Lutheran confessions and one Reformed confession, Schleiermacher is signaling an understanding of conversion that is true to both traditions, which would only be appropriate for the new church of unity; also, the reference to Melancthon may signal Schleiermacher's predilection for Melancthon's more moderate view of human nature and free will, a view which eventually lost to more conservative Lutheran views in the Formula of Concord (1577). See below, notes 62 and 112.

⁵³ §108.1; *CF* 481, 482.

⁵⁴ §108.1; *CF* 482.

to preserve a Protestant emphasis on repentance (as opposed to a Catholic emphasis on confession), but not let it so inform the entire conversion experience that faith is determined by it; he does not want faith to carry negative associations.

Here we see a constellation of three concerns of Schleiermacher. The first concern is polemical in nature. He clearly sees himself articulating, and thereby defending, a distinctly Protestant view, as opposed to a Roman Catholic view, which, he claims, “does not count faith as an element in conversion.”⁵⁵ The second concern is properly dogmatic. He seeks to redefine and reorganize basic terms in order to bring conceptual clarity to Christian doctrines, which, although central to Protestant faith, have been treated inconsistently in the confessions. Even though he openly describes part of the task of dogmatic theology as critiquing past formulations, in this instance the extent of his criticism of classical Protestant formulations of repentance and faith hardly supports his claim that his view is “identical” to views expressed in the confessions. His third concern is to develop the analogy between our changed life and the incarnation: “For our attitude here cannot be different from that of the human nature of Christ in its act of uniting with the quiescent consciousness of being accepted.”⁵⁶ This requires that he frame repentance and faith differently from how the sixteenth-century Protestant confessions had done so, and that faith in particular be given a more positive (and joyful) character, since the incarnation simply does not have the negative qualities associated with mortification and terror. In substance if not in rhetoric, therefore, not Protestant-Catholic polemics but Schleiermacher’s understanding of the incarnation is the engine driving his treatment of conversion.

At issue is the Protestant insight into the radical discontinuity that marks conversion.⁵⁷ There must be a real break from the past, which was commonly expressed in terms of complete passivity on the part of the person being regenerated. Schleiermacher, too, wants to stress this discontinuity, thereby emphasizing the gratuitous nature of conversion. Yet, according to his method and theology, he must also account for some kind of continuity; otherwise, conversion would be unacceptably magical. How can one account for a real change in life, attributed solely to divine causality, which nevertheless respects the laws of nature and hence the historicity of the person? The answer, again, is found in the parallel between the incarnation and conversion. The answer also involves a simplification of terms.

⁵⁵ §108.2; *CF* 483. This representation of the Catholic view is inaccurate (see note 84 below).

⁵⁶ §108.2; *CF* 484–85.

⁵⁷ As a recent Barth scholar has put it, “Grace that is not disruptive is not grace—a point that Flannery O’Connor well grasped alongside Karl Barth. Grace, strictly speaking, does not mean continuity but radical discontinuity, not reform but revolution . . . not the perfecting of virtues but the forgiveness of sins, not improvement but resurrection from the dead. It means repentance, judgment, and death as the portal to life. It means negation and the negation of the negation. The grace of God really comes to lost sinners, but in coming it disrupts them to the core. It slays to make alive and sets the captive free” George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000) 16–17.

In addressing this very basic issue of the divine initiating act, Schleiermacher has to entertain traditional terminology about grace—countless distinctions and terms—that were employed by medieval scholastics, to some degree by the Reformers themselves, and by seventeenth-century Reformed orthodox theologians.⁵⁸ Not surprisingly, he does not have much use for all the distinctions between types of grace that scholasticism(s) had found necessary to employ in order to clarify certain contentious issues. For instance, Schleiermacher notes that the term *prevenient grace* is not particularly useful: “the expression is always inexact, since according to our general type all divine grace is always *prevenient*, and it would be more correct to say ‘preparatory.’”⁵⁹ In the end, he retains only two basic terms: “preparatory grace” and what he refers to variably as “effectual,” “quickening,” or “initiatory” grace, or as a new birth. He also rejects the term *cooperative grace*, although he does not entirely reject the notion of cooperation. As much as possible, Schleiermacher resists describing grace and justification in terms of a chronological, linear sequence of events; he also avoids establishing a single pattern for all Christians. The only sequence, and therefore the only division, of grace that he admits is a most general one—namely, the “sequence of preparatory and quickening grace.”⁶⁰ Let us begin with the latter, since the former is best understood in terms of it.

1. The Grace of Conversion: “Effectual” or “Quickening” Grace

“Perfect and *effectual* divine grace,” Schleiermacher says simply, “is seen only in the union of all three”—regret, change of heart, and faith.⁶¹ Their original coming together can only be a divine act, a new creation, which is conversion. In examining these three elements of conversion, their intricate inner-relations, and their unification, we shall arrive at the core of Schleiermacher’s understanding of grace.

For Schleiermacher, in typically Protestant fashion, grace first comes in the form of a confrontation prompted by Christ’s self-revelation through the Word. That confrontation, however, is not one of divine judgment acting as a crushing hammer, humiliating the individual and driving her to seek mercy;⁶² rather, as

⁵⁸ See Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520–1725*, vol. 3: *The Divine Essence and Attributes* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003) 569–74.

⁵⁹ Note to §108.2; *KGA* 178; see *CF* 485.

⁶⁰ §108.4; *CF* 489.

⁶¹ §108.2; *KGA* 179; see *CF* 486.

⁶² Schleiermacher has in mind here the orthodox Lutheran view, which takes Martin Luther’s experience as paradigmatic. In the Smalcald Articles (1537), under “Repentance,” Luther wrote, “Now this is the thunderbolt of God, by means of which he destroys both the open sinner and the false saint and allows no one to be right but drives the whole lot of them into terror and despair. This is the hammer of which Jeremiah speaks. . . . This is not ‘active contrition,’ a contrived remorse, but ‘passive contrition,’ [torture of conscience], true affliction of the heart, suffering and the pain of death” (Article III:3, 2, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert; trans. Charles P. Arend et al. [Minneapolis: Fortress,

Schleiermacher describes it, it is essentially positive. Christ's "self-imparting perfection confronts [*entgegentritt*] us in its truth."⁶³ The focus is not so much on the self as it is on Christ, whose "soul-stirring exhibition of Himself to us leads us to abjure utterly our previous condition."⁶⁴ Christ's goodness—his sinless perfection, blessedness, and self-impartation—arouses in us profound *regret* (*Reue*), whereby we abjure our past life.

This conversion-regret differs from other manifestations of regret (e.g., "knowledge of sin given by the law"⁶⁵) in two fundamental ways. Whereas the regret born of the law is more concerned with regret over particulars, conversion-regret has to do with an *entire orientation of desire*, its "general condition and its deepest cause" of sin. Moreover, whereas the regret born of confrontation with the law brings "death or despair,"⁶⁶ conversion-regret ushers in joy. The regret of conversion is therefore essentially positive, stemming not from Christ-the-judge or God-the-legislator,⁶⁷ but from the sheer goodness and perfection of Christ, which *confronts us in its goodness* and reorients our desires, creating a new direction of activity. Schleiermacher writes, "true conversion-regret must always eventually arise out of the vision [*Anschauung*] of the perfection of Christ, and this beginning of regeneration must be due to Christ's redeeming activity."⁶⁸

Although for some the confrontation of conversion might come as a soul-shattering experience, a destruction of the ego, according to Schleiermacher that is not necessary or even typical. Departing from a traditionally Protestant emphasis, he argues, "the true change of heart, complete because covering all the ground from regret to faith, need by no means invariably spring from a flood of regret that almost wrecks the whole being by its painful feeling [*Gefühl*]."⁶⁹ He consequently rejects the insistence of the Pietists that "every Christian must be able to point to the very time and place of his conversion."⁷⁰ If anything, he deems it more difficult than not to

2000] 312). Schleiermacher quotes from Article XII of the Augsburg Confession: "Now, properly speaking, repentance consists of two parts: one is contrition or the terrors that strike the conscience when sin is recognized; the other is faith, which is brought to life by the Gospel or absolution. This faith believes that sins are forgiven on account of Christ" (XII:3–5; Kolb and Wengert, 45). The Solid Declaration (hereafter, SD) of the Formula of Concord carried through this emphasis on the divine wrath and the terror it causes in the soul: "Through these means (this preaching and hearing of his Word), God goes about his work and breaks our hearts and draws people, so that they recognize their sins and God's wrath through the preaching of the law and feel real terror, regret, and sorrow in their hearts" (SD Article II:54; Kolb and Wengert, 554).

⁶³ §108.2; KGA 177; see CF 484.

⁶⁴ §108.2; CF 484.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Schleiermacher rejects any notion of the human person, unregenerate or not, being "the object of divine displeasure and wrath" (§109.4; CF 503).

⁶⁸ §108.2; CF 484.

⁶⁹ §108.3; CF 487, slightly altered. See KGA 180–81.

⁷⁰ §108.3; CF 487.

isolate such a moment. Schleiermacher's point is psychologically astute. According to him, people have varying capacities for emotion, and while it is tempting to point to dramatic events, those events do not always mark a real change in one's life. Such dramatic events may really be a part of preparatory grace and may even reflect a stage of immaturity, in that they may be dominated by the sensuous more than the spiritual.⁷¹ His point is also profoundly theological. Insisting that there be an isolatable, identifiable moment is nothing but an "arbitrary and presumptuous restriction of divine grace."⁷² The gratuitous nature of grace means not only that it is freely given, but also that it works when and how it will.

If Schleiermacher departs from Luther and the confessions in not insisting on the devastating character of the first moment of conversion, he retains a crucial insight of Luther's: conversion redirects our attention from ourselves (*incurvatus in se*) to Christ. He also retains, therefore, the *sola fide*, albeit with notable revision. Because the regret of conversion is born of the vision of Christ's perfection, it is inseparable from faith. The rather dry definition of faith in propositional paragraph §108 ("the appropriation of the perfection and blessedness of Christ") belies the intimacy of the relationship between the believer and Christ in faith that Schleiermacher has in mind. The grace of conversion is the beginning of "existence in living fellowship with Christ."⁷³ In the confrontation with Christ through the power of the Word, Christ grasps "us with his assimilating [*aufnehmenden*] activity"⁷⁴ and "unites [us] to Himself."⁷⁵ We are thus drawn into union with Christ, which means that we share in his blessedness. Union with Christ is not the goal of faith but *is* faith, is given in faith. The "share in His blessedness" is present at the very beginning of faith and increases throughout the course of a life of grace.

This is another reason why the grace of conversion does not result in despair, and why repentance alone does not constitute conversion: the attitude of faith is "originally joyful" and "uplifting."⁷⁶ The joy of living fellowship with Christ is what distinguishes conversion-regret from other experiences of regret, and Schleiermacher allows that "many and various relations are possible between the pain of repentance and the joy of conscious fellowship with Christ."⁷⁷ The "certainty of faith" is "an understanding of what union with Christ means" as well

⁷¹ Schleiermacher concludes, "This is new evidence of the inadmissibility of the demand that everyone must be able to distinguish, in the phenomena of consciousness, between the working of grace as initiating the new life and the preparatory work of grace" (§108.3; *CF* 488).

⁷² §108.3; *CF* 487.

⁷³ §108.2; *CF* 484.

⁷⁴ §108.2; *KGA* 177; see *CF* 484.

⁷⁵ §110.3; *CF* 509.

⁷⁶ §108.2; *CF* 485. This language of the joyfulness of faith in conversion is not borrowed from the confessions. The footnote to this passage quotes the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "Moreover, making alive should not be understood as a platonic mirage, but as consolation that truly sustains a life that flees [sin] in contrition" (XII:47, Kolb and Wengert, 194). Schleiermacher's emphasis on joyfulness goes beyond this consolation.

⁷⁷ §108.3; *CF* 488.

as a “delight in that union.”⁷⁸ Faith, then, is at the very center of Schleiermacher’s understanding of grace. “Faith *alone* saves,”⁷⁹ Schleiermacher affirms, because it gives blessedness, because through it one shares in Christ’s blessedness.

For Schleiermacher, the close and vital connection between repentance and faith in conversion cannot be overemphasized. Although technically distinguishable, they are “directly interdependent.”⁸⁰ Faith is the mark of true conversion-regret, and no true conversion-regret occurs without faith. To emphasize this deepest connection, Schleiermacher includes a third element, *change of heart* [*Sinnesänderung*], as that which “binds regret and faith together and represents the true unity of conversion.”⁸¹ As the “middle term” or “joining point” [*Mittelglied*] between regret and faith, *change of heart* does important theological work for Schleiermacher. First, it acts as a corrective to both Protestant and Catholic approaches to conversion. Protestant thought, he warns, tends to lean too much toward one side of conversion (faith), running the risk of making it an instrumental cause. In explicitly rejecting the customary formula that faith is the *causa instrumentalis* (instrumental cause) of justification, Schleiermacher sees himself as protecting the original Protestant insight.⁸² “[W]e bring with us nothing,” he avers, “except our living receptivity [*lebendige Empfänglichkeit*].”⁸³ Catholic thought, he thinks, focuses too much on the other side of conversion (repentance) by emphasizing “confession and satisfaction.”⁸⁴ Schleiermacher reminds both theological traditions that faith is not something we do, produce, or in any way cause. In this sense, he emphasizes all

⁷⁸ §110.2; CF 508. Note that he does not describe faith as a laying hold of Christ or of Christ’s merits, but as joyfulness in having been laid hold of by Christ.

⁷⁹ §109.4; CF 504.

⁸⁰ §108.2; CF 484.

⁸¹ §108.2; CF 485.

⁸² Schleiermacher thinks that this is “liable to too many misunderstandings” (§109.4; CF 504). For a discussion of the problem of faith being misconstrued as a work, see Jan Rohls, *Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen* (trans. John Hoffmeyer; Louisville, Kentucky: Knox, 1998) 126–30.

⁸³ §109.4; CF 504.

⁸⁴ §108.1; CF 483. In his exposition of conversion Schleiermacher overtly criticized the Roman Catholic view, which he took to be represented by the *Roman Catechism of Trent*, only once — namely, for its understanding of “faith” as “only the divinely imparted and humanly accepted knowledge of man’s destiny;” and for “its assertion being accordingly that faith precedes repentance and conversion” (§108.1; CF 483). Schleiermacher was inaccurate on this point. The *Roman Catechism*, citing the Council of Trent, does maintain that faith precedes repentance (“Penance, however, in those who repent, must be preceded by faith, for without faith no man can turn to God. Faith, therefore, cannot on any account be called a part of penance”); however, it also clearly states that conversion precedes faith. See *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests* (trans. John A. McHugh, O.P. and Charles J. Callan, O.P.; N.Y.: Wagner, 1934) 264–65; hereafter, *CCT*. The differences here reflect in part differences over the sacraments. The *Catechism* associates conversion with Baptism (the “Sacrament of Faith,” *CCT* 162) and repentance with the sacrament of penance (the “second plank”). Schleiermacher concedes that such a “difference of language is unfortunate, increasing, of course, the difficulty of comparing clearly the points of divergence” (§108.1; CF 483).

the more that grace is a gift and a relationship, and he thereby nudges us further from the chronological, linear view of regeneration as a process.

Second, the placement of “change of heart” ensures the unity between regret and faith, thereby helping to explain both the discontinuity and the continuity between the pre-conversion life and the life of grace. This was at the heart of the polemics between Protestant and Catholics, with Protestants stressing discontinuity. According to Schleiermacher, whereas in both regret and faith there is some “activity of the self,”⁸⁵ in the change of heart the human is inactive—or, as inactive as a living being can be. He describes this as a temporary cessation of activity: “the turning-point must be a twofold inactivity, a state of being no longer active in one direction and not yet active in another.”⁸⁶ He then goes on to explain that “in the spiritually living existence of the subject nothing is left in place of the vanishing activity except its dormant [*leidentliche*] echo in *feeling*, and nothing is present in respect of the activity not yet begun except dormant [*leidentliche*] anticipation of it in *desire*.”⁸⁷ A little later, Schleiermacher describes this “twofold inactivity” as “desire, in two interconnected forms.”⁸⁸ This desire is none other than the *change of heart*:

*This desire [Verlangen], radiating in two directions, is the change of heart effected by Christ which binds regret and faith together and represents the true unity of conversion.*⁸⁹

The choice of the term “desire” is intriguing for many reasons. It is foreign to the Protestant confessions, and it evokes the young Augustine, which is not the Augustine to whom the Reformers appealed.⁹⁰ Schleiermacher’s understanding of

⁸⁵ §108.2; CF 483.

⁸⁶ §108.2; CF 484.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, emphases added. I have changed Mackintosh and Stewart’s translation of *leidentlich* from “inert” to “dormant” in order to make it more consistent with Schleiermacher’s employment of this term in §108.6, where they translate it as “passive.” As I shall argue more fully below, Schleiermacher chooses *leidentlich* in order to distinguish his view from a view of the person as entirely passive, as a close reading of this passage here in §108.2 indicates: “so ist der Wendepunkt zwischen beiden eine zwiefache Unthätigkeit in der Form eines Nichtmehrthätigseins in jener und Nochnichtthätigseins in dieser. Für sein geistig lebendiges Sein bleibt daher dem Subject nur übrig statt der verschwindenden Thätigkeit der leidentliche Nachklang derselben im Gefühl, und in Bezug auf die noch nicht begonnene als leidentliche Vorahnung das Verlangen” (KGA 176). Note how he chooses to employ many qualifications of “activity” rather than use the term “passivity.” He is trying to convey the stillest state of a living human being, who, because he or she is living, will always be in some way active. Here, I have chosen to translate *leidentlich* as “dormant” to capture the poetic sense of this particular passage; elsewhere I translate it as “receptive.” See note 131 below.

⁸⁸ §108.2; CF 485.

⁸⁹ §108.2; CF 485, emphases added. I have changed Mackintosh’s and Stewart’s translation of *zweistrahlig* as “acting in two directions” to “radiating in two directions,” since “acting” contradicts Schleiermacher’s point about the minimum of activity. See KGA 177.

⁹⁰ Likewise, in his treatment of original sin in §70, Schleiermacher appealed to Augustine’s *Enchiridion*, citing him as an authority over against the Solid Declaration: “[W]e must nevertheless

desire will be explored in greater detail below. For now the important point is that he uses it to explain human relative inactivity during conversion, thereby highlighting the gratuitous nature of the grace of conversion.

And so we return to where we began this section: “Perfect and *effectual* divine grace is seen only in the union of all three.”⁹¹ The turning point of conversion occurs through an act of divine grace, which creates something new by effecting and bringing together perfectly regret, change of heart, and faith, so that there is a deep co-inherence of these three, each being complete and full in itself precisely through its interconnection with the others. In order to appreciate the significance of this as a divine initiatory act, it is instructive to consider the state of the individual before the moment of conversion—to consider, that is, the matter of preparatory grace.

2. Preparatory Grace

Like the grace of conversion—indeed, like all grace, according to Schleiermacher—preparatory grace is the work of Christ, and only the work of Christ. He describes the preparatory stage as the “period of hidden life,” when the workings of divine grace are not yet decisive. In this hidden life, “the true life of Christ in us announces itself at first only in weak and intermittent impulses.”⁹² During this preparatory stage there are intimations of the three elements of conversion: occasions of imperfect regret,⁹³ experiences of a nascent desire for a change of heart, and a “presentiment of [Christ’s] dignity”⁹⁴ or of some kind of inward surrender. Yet these can be deemed no more than “approximations to faith,” since such impulses have neither strength nor unity. So, for example, regrets may be sincere and may be produced by a vision of Christ, but during the process of preparatory grace regret is not yet “a continuous inward movement amounting to the dawn of living faith.”⁹⁵ Moreover, although imperfect regrets or nascent desires may be prompted by a vision of Christ, such visions may merely look “back to the figure and teaching of Christ.”⁹⁶ During the stage of preparatory grace, Christ’s influence on us will also prompt good works, which might even become habits, although such good works “are not rooted in the regeneration of the doer.”⁹⁷ In preparatory grace, therefore, the impulses toward the three elements of conversion and toward good works are still external to us.⁹⁸

acknowledge with Augustine that some element of the original good must still survive in human nature” (§70.2; *CF* 284).

⁹¹ §108.2; *CF* 486.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ These do not yet have “the fixed inward resolution to be no longer under the power of sin” (§110.2; *CF* 508).

⁹⁴ §108.2; *CF* 486.

⁹⁵ §108.2; *CF* 485.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ §110.2; *CF* 506.

⁹⁸ See §110.2; *CF* 507; see also §113.1; *CF* 525.

Christ, working on us through the Christian common life, prepares us for effectual grace by heightening our susceptibility to his Word.

Schleiermacher thus establishes both continuities and discontinuities between preparatory grace and effectual grace. The continuities are threefold: in both cases, grace is the activity of Christ; grace works only in and through the Christian corporate life; and the three elements of conversion (regret, change of heart, and faith) are present. The discontinuities are also threefold: whereas in conversion the three elements are strong, continual, and unified, during preparatory grace they are weak, intermittent, and fragmented; whereas in conversion union with Christ becomes an internal principle for our thoughts, actions, and emotions, during preparatory grace we have not yet experienced union with Christ and so Christ remains an external principle; and finally, whereas at the moment of conversion Christ alone is active, during preparatory grace we remain active in a myriad of different ways (primarily through resistance), although gracious activity is always strictly divine activity.

Still, some of Schleiermacher's language suggests that preparatory grace requires work and effort on the part of the individual. In referring to "approximations to faith," claiming that "only gradually can each consciousness reach certainty for itself,"⁹⁹ and mentioning the possibility of "habits,"¹⁰⁰ Schleiermacher seems to suggest that the individual can and should cultivate regret, desire, and faith—as though the consciousness of grace could somehow be trained. In other words, his position on this point appears vulnerable to charges of semi-Pelagianism: the individual can and ought "to do what is in one" (*facere quod in se est*). Schleiermacher is insistent, however, that preparatory grace is solely the work of Christ. How, exactly, does Christ prepare us for the grace of conversion? How, exactly, is conversion effected? The answer: through the preached Word. This is the extension of the mystical approach he developed in his Christology.

3. *Grace and the Word*

In both preparatory and effectual grace, Christ works on us through the preached Word. It is in the Word that an intuition of Christ's dignity causes us to surrender ourselves. Here Schleiermacher applies his mystical approach, developed in his Christology, to his doctrine of grace.¹⁰¹ In his doctrine on the work of Christ, Schleiermacher explained (in general) how Christ redeems. The issue peculiar to the treatise on grace is, as the title of the division makes clear, precisely how "fellowship with the perfection and blessedness of the redeemer expresses itself in the individual soul."¹⁰² Schleiermacher must explain, in a way that respects the historicity of the influence of Christ as well as the historicity of each individual,

⁹⁹ §108.2; *CF* 486.

¹⁰⁰ §110.2; *CF* 506.

¹⁰¹ See above, pp. 141–42.

¹⁰² Division heading, *CF* 476, emphases added.

how Christ redeems *individuals*, how grace operates on individuals—how, that is, grace is a divine (supernatural) activity that nonetheless works through the nexus of natural causation.¹⁰³ He does this by positing a historical continuity going back to Christ and his disciples. He writes,

These divine workings of grace are supernatural in so far as they depend upon and actually proceed from the being of God in the Person of Christ. At the same time, being historical and formative of history, they are natural in so far as they have a general natural connexion with the historical life of Christ; and in detail each working that establishes a new personality is bound up in its efficacy with the historical totality of Christ's effects.¹⁰⁴

According to Schleiermacher, Jesus communicated his perfect God-consciousness to his disciples, and that same faith produced in them is produced in us through the preached word: "[O]riginally individuals were grasped by Christ, and now also it is always by an influence of Christ himself, mediated by his *spiritual presence* in the Word, that individuals are assumed into the fellowship of the new life."¹⁰⁵ Schleiermacher insists that faith is effected in us in exactly the same manner as it was effected in Christ's disciples because of the divine power of the Word:

The constant factor is above all the divine power of the Word—taking the expression in its widest sense—by which conversion is still effected and faith still arises. The difference is simply that the self-revelation of Christ is now mediated by those who preach Him; but they being appropriated by Him as His instruments, *the activity really proceeds from Him and is essentially His own*.¹⁰⁶

This emphasis on the sacramental power of the preached Word is distinctly Protestant.¹⁰⁷

As the above analysis indicates, Schleiermacher's view of the communication of grace to individuals is anything but individualistic. The communication of grace necessarily takes place in the corporate life of the (evangelical) church, through the preached word and the sacraments.¹⁰⁸ Schleiermacher hereby accounts

¹⁰³ He has already explained the relation between natural and divine causality (see §51); grace is the most concrete instance and experience of that.

¹⁰⁴ §108.5; *CF* 492.

¹⁰⁵ §106.2; *KGA* 167; see *CF* 477–78, emphases added. Compare §88.2: "[I]t must still be possible to have the same experiences . . . Our proposition, therefore, depends upon the assumption that this influence of the fellowship in producing a like faith is none other than the influence of the personal perfection of Jesus Himself" (*CF* 363).

¹⁰⁶ §108.5; *CF* 490–91, emphases added.

¹⁰⁷ For more on the preached Word as a Reformation principle, see B. A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry: Luther's Fifth means of Grace," and "Gospel and Eucharist: John Calvin on the Lord's Supper," chaps. 5 & 6, respectively, in *The Old Protestantism and the New* (90–117).

¹⁰⁸ There is for him no grace apart from the church: "[I]t is a condition of that activity of the Redeemer that the individuals should enter the sphere of His historical influence, where they become aware of Him in His self-revelation" (§100.2; *CF* 426–27).

for the historical nature of human persons and communities while also asserting the supernatural. In short, his account addresses both the *mediated* nature of our relation to Christ as well as the *immediate* nature of that relationship: “The efficacy of Christ, therefore, consists solely in the human communication of the Word, however only in so far [as] it moves on the Word of Christ, embodying the divine power of Christ himself. . . .”¹⁰⁹

Thus far, Schleiermacher has stated but not really argued that conversion occurs when the three elements—regret, change of heart, and faith—come together perfectly, that is to say, completely, simultaneously, and suddenly. This new creation, he has insisted, can only be a divine creation. Further explanation, however, is still needed. More precisely, Schleiermacher needs to explain, as he himself puts it, “the contrast between nature and grace [*Gegensatz* (sic) *zwischen Natur und Gnade*].”¹¹⁰ This he does in the concluding expository paragraph of §108.

4. Grace and the “Natural Activity of the Subject”

Any full treatment of grace comes inevitably to the question of the role of the human in conversion: Does or can the human person in any way cooperate with divine grace? Schleiermacher concludes §108 with a discussion of the “state of the subject during conversion.”¹¹¹ The specter of the so-called synergist position is palpable in these last three pages, and Schleiermacher appears acutely aware of what is at stake for any Protestant doctrine of grace.¹¹² Five times (only one time

¹⁰⁹ §108.5; *KGA* 187; see *CF* 492.

¹¹⁰ §108.6, *KGA* 191; see *CF* 495. This is the only place where he uses this coupling of “nature and grace.”

¹¹¹ §108.6, *KGA* 187; see *CF* 492.

¹¹² The issue of synergy was at the center of the debate on free will between Luther and Erasmus. Erasmus wrote, “And the upshot of it is that we should not arrogate anything to ourselves but attribute all things we have received to the divine grace, which called us when we were turned away, which purified us by faith, which gave us this gift, that our will might be *synergos* (fellow-worker) with grace, although grace is itself sufficient for all things and has no need of the assistance of any human will” (“On the Freedom of the Will,” in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* [ed. and trans. E. Gordon Rupp and Philip S. Watson; Library of Christian Classics; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969] 81). Erasmus rejected the notion that the human being “is simply to God as clay in the hands of a potter” because such complete passivity would mean that “whatever shape the vase takes must be attributed to no one but the potter” (*ibid.*, 71). Luther responded, “For when it has been conceded and agreed that free choice, having lost its liberty, is perforce in bondage to sin and cannot will anything good, I can make no other sense of these words than that free choice is an empty phrase, of which the reality has been lost. Lost liberty, according to my grammar, is no liberty at all” (“On the Bondage of the Will,” in *Luther and Erasmus*, 181). The debate on synergism, however, was not only between “Catholic” and “Protestant” views of grace but also rocked Lutheranism itself. This debate on cooperation and free will was at the center of Protestant self-understanding and became a matter of fierce debates among second-generation Lutherans. In the so-called “synergist controversy,” “Gnesio-Lutherans” (“genuine Lutherans”), who insisted on adhering to the strongest statements of Luther on the matter and therefore rejected any conciliatory stance toward Catholics or Calvinists, opposed the “Philippists,” who followed Philipp Melancthon’s more moderate approach. For the most part, the more conservative interpretation of the Augsburg Confession dominated the Solid

critically) he cites the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord (1577), which rejected “the teachings of the Synergists, who contend that the human being has not completely died to the good in spiritual matters but rather is seriously wounded and half dead.”¹¹³ Clearly, Schleiermacher wants to distance himself from any recognizable “synergist” view and for the most part *claims* to be in agreement with the orthodox Protestant position. His accord with the Protestant confessions is not, however, as straightforward as he makes it out to be. Nor is it the case (as his detractors would no doubt like it to be) that, despite his claims to the contrary, he in fact is a synergist because he allows for the cooperation of free will during conversion. Both of these interpretations imply agreement with the conventional terms of the debate, terms that Schleiermacher does not accept.

Three times in the final expository paragraph of §108, Schleiermacher emphatically denies any agency of cooperation on the part of the human person. And three times he qualifies that denial. He begins the discussion saying, “it seems obvious, then, that here *no causal agency* can be attributed to the person who is being taken up into fellowship.”¹¹⁴ Yet he quickly sounds a note of impatience and appears to ally himself with the more moderate position of Melancthon:

On the other side, if we bear in mind that the converted person—afterwards, in living union with Christ himself, and before that as well, even though in the corporate life of sin—is nonetheless self-active as a rational, sensible individual being [*als vernünftig sinnliches Einzelwesen selbstthätig ist*], and that in general there can be no living being, not even for a complete moment, wholly devoid of self-activity. . . .¹¹⁵

In emphasizing that the human is a *living* being, which for him can only mean somehow active, Schleiermacher rejects the Solid Declaration’s axioms that before grace humans are capable only of evil¹¹⁶ and that during conversion the individual is nothing more than a log. The Solid Declaration’s anthropology, based as it is on a

Declaration of the Formula of Concord, the second article of which addresses the issue of free will. (The Solid Declaration is the full, “clear,” and final version of the Formula of Concord; the Epitome is a summary, or abridged version.) The Solid Declaration reiterated Luther’s position “that the human being, blinded and held prisoner, does only the will of the devil and what is hostile to God the Lord. Therefore, there is no cooperation of our will in our conversion, and God must draw and give new birth to the human being” (II:44; Kolb and Wengert, 552). Several times it emphasizes that the human person brings nothing to conversion but is “like a block of wood” (II:73; Kolb and Wengert, 558), is “completely lifeless and ‘dead’” (II:10; Kolb and Wengert, 545; see also II:7), is “like a block of wood or a stone” (II:20; Kolb and Wengert, 548; see also II:24, 54). For brief summaries of the synergist debates and the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, see Kolb and Wengert, 481–85; see also *Creeds and Confessions of the Reformation Era* (vol. 2 of *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*; ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 166–67.

¹¹³ SD II:77; Kolb and Wengert, 559.

¹¹⁴ §108.6; *CF* 493, emphases added.

¹¹⁵ §108.6; *KGA* 187; see *CF* 493.

¹¹⁶ See SD II:17, 18, 24.

literal interpretation of Genesis, delineates “four distinct, dissimilar conditions”¹¹⁷ of human free will: before the fall, after the fall but before conversion, after conversion, and after resurrection. Schleiermacher rejects this anthropology because he deems it untenable in the nineteenth century — with its new understanding of history, to be sure, but also with its biological, psychological, and social insights. He therefore reframes the question: “How does the natural activity of the subject, which certainly exists in the moment of conversion, relate to the influence of Christ evoking faith and the change of heart?”¹¹⁸

Schleiermacher’s immediate answer is a classically “correct” Protestant one: “[W]e cannot, without abandoning our fundamental assumption, regard the natural self-activity of humans in that moment as cooperation.”¹¹⁹ Yet, for a second time, this is followed by a qualification that seems impatient: “Certainly what has already occurred through preparatory grace is *thereby cooperating*, but this is itself a part of the divine operation of grace and does not belong to the individual’s own activity.”¹²⁰ Seeking to deflect possible objections, he cites the Solid Declaration.¹²¹ Rather than ending the discussion there, with that appeal to authority, he pushes the point further, beyond the pale of classical Protestantism. He notes that cooperation can only mean that divine grace is somehow restricted or conditioned by human activity, *and he then concedes that this must be the case*,¹²² the reason being that we must be able to give an account of how the Word operates in the individual.

As we have seen, Schleiermacher argues that Christ’s grace is mediated through the preached Word. The Word, however, in order to be effective, has to work on something that is capable of hearing it: “For the Word, through which the influence of Christ is mediated, can only accomplish this mediation in so far as it penetrates [*eindringt*] the person, wherefore the activity of the sense-faculties as well as of the inner functions of consciousness is required.”¹²³ Words are not spoken to logs and

¹¹⁷ SD II:2; Kolb and Wengert, 543.

¹¹⁸ §108.6; *KGA* 187–88; see *CF*, 493.

¹¹⁹ §108.6; *KGA* 188; see *CF* 493.

¹²⁰ §108.6; *KGA* 188; see *CF* 493, emphases added.

¹²¹ He quotes two passages: “It follows from this, as has been said, that as soon as the Holy Spirit has begun his work of rebirth and renewal in us through the Word and the holy sacraments, it is certain that on the basis of his power we can and should be cooperating with him, though still in great weakness. This occurs not on the basis of our fleshly, natural powers but on the basis of the new powers and gifts which the Holy Spirit initiated in us in conversion” (SD II:65; Kolb and Wengert, 556); Schleiermacher adds, “What is said expressly of the period after conversion holds good all the more for the period preceding it” (*CF* 493, n. 1). He also makes reference to the Solid Declaration’s appeal to Luther’s position: “[H]uman beings in and of themselves or on the basis of their own natural powers are not capable of anything and cannot help with their own conversion” (SD II:89; Kolb and Wengert, 561).

¹²² “Anything proceeding purely from [one’s] own inner life could co-operate only so far as the efficacy of divine grace was actually conditioned by these activities of [one’s] own. It cannot indeed be denied that this may happen” (§108.6; *CF* 493).

¹²³ §108.6; *KGA* 188; see *CF* 493. One cannot help but think of Karl Rahner’s *Hörer des Wortes* (München: Kösel, 1963); trans. by Michael Richards, *Hearers of the Word* (N.Y.: Herder, 1969).

stones. Schleiermacher concludes, "It follows with good reason that the capacity for this apprehension [of the Word], in so far as *the activity of all those functions depend on the free will of the person*, must be conferred upon the person *in its natural state*."¹²⁴ Schleiermacher again quotes the Solid Declaration, although the passage to which he refers does not in fact support his point. The Declaration grants a modicum of free will to one who is fallen but not yet redeemed: a person can decide whether or not to go to church and hear the sermon.¹²⁵ What Schleiermacher is getting at, however, is something altogether different. In talking about "natural activity" and the "natural state," he is really talking about the human constitution, not just the human state of sinfulness. Moreover, the human constitution he has in mind has not undergone the ontological rupture of a historical fall.¹²⁶ Schleiermacher, in other words, implicitly affirms some fundamental continuities. Christ works on us as we are.

This affirmation of our basic organic nature and our natural condition calls for another clear Protestant denial. Schleiermacher for the third time insists, "What happens, however, after the Word has penetrated the soul, thereby achieving its aim for the person, here we can concede *no natural cooperation* on the part of the person."¹²⁷ This raises another contentious issue in the debates on grace: whether or not we are free at least to consent. Schleiermacher appears to vacillate on this issue. We consent, but our consent nevertheless must "be ascribed only to the antecedent work of grace."¹²⁸ Likewise, he reaffirms that our natural activity cannot prepare for grace or even consent to grace because it is either resistant or indifferent, but then in the same breath he again describes the surrender to Christ as a form of consent.

Why this apparent back-and-forth on cooperation and consent, two traditional litmus tests for a Protestant view of conversion and justification? Is it a sign that he really is a synergist or semi-Pelagian? The answer, I suggest, does not have to do with which side of the debate he endorses, but rather with his unease about the terms of the debate, particularly on the Protestant side. His frustration is palpable:

Therefore the assumption of a complete lack of relation between one's own activity and the higher influence yields no satisfactory result, and the problem remains of finding a state of activity standing in relation to the influence of Christ, yet which would be *neither resistance nor cooperation*.¹²⁹

Schleiermacher rejects radical discontinuities because in the natural causal system there has to be some point of connection. He therefore rejects the two standard

¹²⁴ §108.6; KGA 188; see CF 493; emphases added.

¹²⁵ See SD II:53; Kolb and Wengert, 554.

¹²⁶ For Schleiermacher's understanding of sin and his interpretation of the "Fall," see *Glaubenslehre* §§65–85.

¹²⁷ §108.6; KGA 188; see CF 494, emphases added.

¹²⁸ §108.6; CF 494; see KGA 188–89.

¹²⁹ §108.6; KGA 189; see CF 494, emphases added.

options of cooperation¹³⁰ or resistance, just as he rejects the simplistic view that humans are either passive or active.

The solution, for Schleiermacher, is not to be found in choosing between untenable options or in hashing out some compromise between them; it is rather to be had in reformulating the terms of the debate by focusing on the Word, through which the grace of Christ is mediated, and on how that Word is apprehended. More particularly, for Schleiermacher the answer resides in our “living receptivity” (*lebendige Empfänglichkeit*). He calls this the “middle term” or “joining point” (*Mittelglied*), and he understands it to be organically based, inherent in the very constitution of the human person. It is the “first point of attachment” (*der erste Anknüpfungspunkt*):

This middle term [*Mittelglied*]¹³¹—to which we have recourse in all similar cases, which is a receptive [*leidentlicher*] state that nevertheless includes that minimum of self-activity, and which belongs to every complete moment—therefore meets the conditions of the problem perfectly; but one entirely vitiates the solution if one further divides it into an active and passive [*leidend*] receptivity, and wants to allow only the passive to apply in our case, because one must then give an account of yet another simultaneous self-activity, since the same old difficulty returns.¹³¹

Schleiermacher’s choice of the term *leidentlich* rather than *passiv* is telling here. His point is to avoid a term that suggests lifelessness, which had been emphasized by Luther and consequently by the Solid Declaration. For Schleiermacher, some minimum of activity, of livingness, is necessarily present in our receptivity. Receptivity is a capacity (not a faculty) for receiving impressions and influences; it is a state or tendency that occurs without consent. Hence, as a response to that which acts upon us, consent in this context is not a rational act of the will but a happy and relieved surrender to the influence of Christ. Not only *should* receptivity

¹³⁰ Cooperation is stereotypically associated with the Catholic view, which is often mischaracterized in Protestant polemics.

¹³¹ §108.6; KGA 189; see CF 494. This passage demonstrates the difficulty of translating *leidentlich*. In Schleiermacher’s time, *leidentlich*, like *passiv*, was an antonym for “active,” but it carried a wider range of meanings and associations. Formed from the infinitive *leiden*, “to suffer,” it carried connotations of suffering, tolerating, bearing, enduring, being acted upon, being passible, etc.—the one side of passion. As was also true of English at the time, these terms did not necessarily carry only negative connotations. In the first part of this long sentence, Schleiermacher’s choice of the modifier *leidentlich* rather than *passiv* is intentional and is one of the hinges on which his doctrine of grace turns. Mackintosh and Stewart have translated it as “inert” (see note 87) and, most commonly, “passive.” As we have seen, however, Schleiermacher explicitly rejects the idea of a passivity that is inert or lifeless. I have chosen to translate it (in most cases) as “receptive” in order to convey the distinction Schleiermacher is making here: a *relatively* inactive or restful state in which the *living* human person is undergoing a change. The contrast is made clear in the next paragraph, in which the noun *Passivität* refers to something unacceptable to Schleiermacher. Nonetheless, his second use of the root word in the present passage, *leidend*, is best translated as “passive” since in this case Schleiermacher is responding to a Latin text which reads in part “non activam sed passivam.”

not be divided into passive and active, it *cannot* be so divided. This is why it is neither a compromise nor an inclination toward one side or the other. Either/Or terms—active *or* passive, cooperative *or* non-cooperative—simply do not apply. “Lively receptivity” is at once that which “suffers” (or is acted upon) and that which responds. It is that fleeting, virtually unidentifiable state of the maximal receptivity and minimal activity that a living being with God-consciousness can sustain.

This receptivity is heightened through preparatory grace, so that at the moment of conversion it is not dull, vague, or in any way like a stone. On the contrary, aroused as it is by preparatory grace, it is as though it were brimming. In preparatory grace, Christ through the Word heightens our natural receptivity, bringing us to the point at which we are most receptive, or primed. At that point, the Word grasps us and we apprehend the Word, because the Word has penetrated us and we have been prepared to hear and respond. Conversion, then, is a calling forth, an excitement, an evocation of this lively receptivity that is a constitutive aspect of being human. Schleiermacher explains, “Conversion is none other than the calling-forth of this self-activity which is united with Christ—that is to say, the living receptivity passes over into quickened self-activity.”¹³² Schleiermacher takes care to distinguish this “living receptivity” from “pure passivity” (*Passivität*).¹³³

We have seen Schleiermacher appeal to the notion of a “middle term” or “joining point” before in order to explain a minimum of activity that is not pure passivity. Recall that in §108.2 he described the “change of heart” (*Sinnesänderung*) as occupying the space—as being the joining point (*Mittelglied*)—between regret and faith. The change of heart “binds regret and faith together and represents the true unity of conversion.”¹³⁴ And we have also seen Schleiermacher describe the change of heart as *desire* (*Verlangen*) radiating in two directions.¹³⁵ Here in §108.6, he identifies living receptivity, too, as *desire* (*Verlangen*), this time making more explicit the significance of this designation: “For mere desire is not an act; it is but the anticipatory feeling [*Vorgefühl*] of an act that may possibly happen if a certain impulse occurs later.”¹³⁶ Whereas in the earlier discussion he was dealing with the elements of conversion (regret, change of heart, and faith) as they are experienced, here he elaborates on desire, delving deeper anthropologically, so to speak, into what makes that experience possible.

It is necessary to quote Schleiermacher at some length, since what he does in the last page of his proposition on conversion is the key to his entire doctrine of grace.

¹³² §108.6; *KGA* 190; see *CF* 495.

¹³³ Mackintosh and Stewart found it necessary to insert the qualifier “pure” here to emphasize the distinction between *passiv* and *leidentlich*, a distinction they themselves do not consistently observe.

¹³⁴ §108.2; *CF* 485; see *KGA* 177. See above, pp. 150–51.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ §108.6; *CF* 495; see *KGA* 190.

If, however, we trace that element [living receptivity] from this point, where it already appears heightened through the workings of preparatory grace, further back, and ask what the liveliness consists of in its first beginnings, *and in what way it differs from passivity* [*Passivität*], we find that it points to the desire for fellowship with God, which belongs to the original perfection of human nature—a desire never entirely extinguished, however much [it is] pushed back to the border of unconsciousness.¹³⁷

This desire, this living receptivity to the Word (the same desire which binds together regret and faith, which is acted upon by grace, and which responds to grace) is a desire for God that is part of our original perfection and remains with us. Again, Schleiermacher affirms another continuity, this time between our original perfection and our present state of sinfulness. He continues,

In establishing this, therefore, as the first point of attachment [*Anknüpfungspunkt*] for *all divine workings of grace*, we exclude only that passivity [*Passivität*] which is totally incompatible with human nature, by virtue of which the person undergoing conversion should resemble lifeless objects,

. . .¹³⁸

At exactly this point in his exposition Schleiermacher cites the Solid Declaration for the last time in §108.¹³⁹ Now it has become abundantly clear why he does not like the terms of the debate: only lifeless objects are passive. Here Schleiermacher departs from the official Lutheran (and, in the united church, Protestant) position. The question is whether with the phrase “we exclude only” he is merely resisting the extreme position of the Gnesio-Lutherans or making a more fundamental move. I maintain that he is doing the latter.¹⁴⁰

What Schleiermacher is really talking about is the human constitution: “This desire is therefore only the *indelible residuum in the human race* of that original divine communication, which constitutes [*constituirt*] human nature, not in and for

¹³⁷ §108.6, *KGA* 190; see *CF* 495; emphases added.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, emphases added.

¹³⁹ The full text to which he refers reads, “But before people are enlightened, converted, reborn, renewed, and drawn back to God by the Holy Spirit, they cannot in and of themselves, out of their own natural powers, begin, effect, or accomplish anything in spiritual matters for their own conversion or rebirth, any more than a stone or block of wood or piece of clay . . . can. For although they can control their bodies and can listen to the gospel and think about it to a certain extent and even speak of it (as Pharisees and hypocrites do), they regard it as foolishness and cannot believe it. They behave in this case worse than a block of wood, for they are rebellious against God’s will and hostile to it, wherever the Holy Spirit does not exercise his powers in them and ignite and effect faith and other God-pleasing virtues and obedience in them” (SD II:24; Kolb and Wengert, 548–49; see also paragraphs 7, 10, 20, 59, 73, 77, 89).

¹⁴⁰ Here I depart from Wyman’s otherwise persuasive argument. Wyman concludes, “Schleiermacher is not jumping into the synergistic camp: in §108.6 he largely agrees with the Solid Declaration’s antisynnergistic assertions. But he does think that the document goes too far in II/24 with its analogies to a stone, a block of wood, and a lump of clay. In its zeal to put down synergism, the Solid Declaration dehumanizes human beings, reducing them to objects of grace deprived of subjectivity” (“The Role of the Protestant Confessions,” 380).

itself, but rather, only in so far as it is raised up to a decisive power, which *forms the contrast between nature and grace*.”¹⁴¹ The difference in imagery between what it takes to enliven something utterly lifeless and to elicit something already present, even if inchoate, is significant and pertains to the issue of the crisis of the soul. For Schleiermacher, the grace of conversion is indeed a new creation, but not a creation out of nothing. That which inheres in the very constitution of the human person is the desire for God, not necessarily hostility and certainly not lifelessness. Preparatory grace arouses this desire, raising receptivity to lively receptivity, so that when the grace of conversion comes, there is consent in the form of happy surrender.¹⁴² This view of grace as perfecting and uplifting is not a classically Protestant view, although it does suggest traces of Pietism.

Schleiermacher has thus begun, at the very least, to reframe the question. The reason for this is his analogy between effectual grace and the incarnation. He concludes his proposition on conversion by drawing out this analogy, or parallel:

Indeed the parallel between the origin of the divine life in us and the incarnation of the Redeemer proves itself here. For the susceptibility [*Leidentlichkeit*] of human nature in that moment was one such living receptivity for an absolutely powerful God-consciousness—a desire, as it were, to be so determined and seized—which [receptivity] was transformed through that creative act into person-forming self-activity; so [in us] this desire is heightened through the self-communication of Christ in conversion to a self-activity constituting a coherent new life.¹⁴³

This “coherent new life” is none other than the life of sanctification, or as he refers to it elsewhere, “the gracious state of the redeemed.”¹⁴⁴

Schleiermacher does not pick up this thread of the discussion of how “the presupposed receptive state during conversion relates to the subsequent spontaneity in the community of Christ”¹⁴⁵ until §112, where he addresses the good works of the regenerate. Although the relation between receptivity during conversion and spontaneity afterward is continuous, so that there is no interval between them, in his exposition he must nevertheless first treat justification and its two elements, forgiveness and adoption. For the purposes of the present essay, however, I shall follow the thread unbroken.

¹⁴¹ §108.6; *KGA* 190–91; see *CF* 495, emphases added.

¹⁴² Cf. §110.2; *CF* 507.

¹⁴³ §108.6, *KGA* 191; see *CF* 495. See also §70.2: “The capacity to appropriate the grace offered to us is the indispensable condition of all the operations of grace, so that, without it, no improvement of man would be possible” (*CF* 283).

¹⁴⁴ §90.1; *CF* 369.

¹⁴⁵ §108.6; *KGA* 188; see *CF* 493. This is the second of two “unavoidable” questions that frame the discussion of §108.6, even though this second one is not really addressed until §112.

Sanctification (§§110–112)

In living fellowship with Christ the natural powers of the regenerate are put at His disposal, whereby there is produced a life akin to His perfection and blessedness; and this is the state of Sanctification. (§110)¹⁴⁶

[A]nd to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:24).

Schleiermacher, in considering the sanctified life, once again shows impatience with the conventional terms of the debate.¹⁴⁷ He begins §112 as he began §108—by citing the authority of the Protestant confessions in the body of his text, noting variations in interpretation, and engaging in a little anti-Catholic polemics.¹⁴⁸ He shows greater agitation, however, with an extreme trajectory within Protestantism than with the presumed Catholic position: “The most remarkable misconception, however, is that which, in the course of this controversy, has led to the extravagant position that good works are injurious to salvation—a position only half-heartedly surrendered.”¹⁴⁹ His proposition stands in simple contrast to this view: “The good works of the regenerate are natural effects of faith, and as such are objects of divine good pleasure” (§112). Once again, the distinctiveness of Schleiermacher’s treatment of this perennial issue is found in his analogy between the incarnation and grace, except that now he shifts his focus from the act of union (regeneration) to the state of union (sanctification):

Allowing ourselves to be taken up into living fellowship with Christ, we are laid hold of by the union of the divine with the human nature in His Person, and consent to this becomes a constant and active will to maintain and extend this union. Anything this will produces is a good work. . . .¹⁵⁰

Pursuing the analogy, he adds,

The right thing to say is this, that our union with Christ in faith is, though not as completely, yet quite as essentially, an active obedience as His life was an active obedience of the human nature to the indwelling being of God within Him; and our reception into living fellowship with Him is the fruitful germ of all good works in the same way as the act of the uniting was in His case

¹⁴⁶ *CF* 505.

¹⁴⁷ Schleiermacher feels the need to defend his use of the term *sanctification*. The term was rejected by Luther but was employed by Calvin as part of his *duplex gratia*. For Schleiermacher the decision not only to use the term but to highlight it was simple: “[T]he retention of the term ‘sanctification’ is justified because it is scriptural” (§110.1; *CF* 505), although he is quick to point out that *Heiligung* means not “being holy” but “striving for holiness” (*ibid.*, 506).

¹⁴⁸ “Anyone who holds that good works are necessary to blessedness, because for him faith is mere knowledge, is using a different vocabulary from ours, or holding an entirely different doctrine of redemption” (§112.1; *CF* 518).

¹⁴⁹ §112.1; *CF* 518.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

the germ of all redeeming activity. This may also be expressed by saying that the regenerate cannot but do good works in virtue of faith.¹⁵¹

In thus describing faith as union with Christ and grounding the life of the regenerate Christian in the life (the active obedience) of Christ, Schleiermacher shifts the framework of how the gracious life of the redeemed should be understood. The life of grace is necessarily a life of increase and progress, which “ever approximates more to pure harmony with the impulse issuing from Christ, and therefore to indistinguishability from Christ Himself.”¹⁵² There is genuine growth in sanctification. This raises the question, of course, of the degree to which we are active in this growth. Schleiermacher feels obliged to address the familiar questions, although he does so with a definite note of frustration. In this sense, he has only partially reframed the debate; he is still constrained by traditional preoccupations. In quick succession he considers the conventional questions about good works, exposing in his replies the “needless anxiety”¹⁵³ he sees behind each one.

¹⁵¹ §112.1; *CF* 519. Some explanation of the significance of Christ’s “active obedience” for Schleiermacher may be in order. In his soteriology, Schleiermacher emphasizes Christ’s life, which was essentially active, to explain Christ’s redeeming activity. True, this life was framed by the coming together of the human and divine in him (his supernatural origin) and by his death, but it is Christ’s active obedience (rather than his passive obedience on the cross) that is redemptive: “The active obedience of Christ was rather his perfect fulfillment of the *divine will*. . . . Indeed, Christ’s highest achievement consists in this, that He so animates us that we ourselves are led to an ever more perfect fulfillment of the divine will” (§104.3; *CF* 456). This is absolutely critical for Schleiermacher and for any comparison of his Christology with that of others. According to Schleiermacher’s soteriology, Christ’s redeeming activity is exhibited not so much in his death as in his life—in the power and activity of his God-consciousness. Christ’s death, he argues, can be said to be salvific not because of the death *per se* but because of his active obedience, the result of his perfect God-consciousness. Schleiermacher distances himself from a “wounds theology” (instances of which he found in both Pietism and Roman Catholicism) that morbidly focuses on the suffering of the victim, as well as from a view of God as demanding the justice of a sacrifice (see §104.1; *CF* 452). In contrast to these views, he points to the continued agency of Christ. What was necessary was not Christ’s death but “that He should first have entered into our fellowship” (§104.4; *CF* 457). The salvific aspect of his death was his activity: “For in His suffering unto death, occasioned by His steadfastness, there is manifested to us an absolutely self-denying love; and in this there is represented to us with perfect vividness the way in which God was in Him to reconcile the world to Himself, just as it is in His suffering that we feel most perfectly how imperturbable was His blessedness” (§104.4; *CF* 458–59). This soteriology naturally has implications for Schleiermacher’s understanding of the Christian life of grace. Unlike Calvin, for example, who described the Christian life in terms of carrying the cross, Schleiermacher describes the gracious state of the redeemed in terms of a different kind of active obedience. In thus using Christ’s active obedience as the paradigm for our own life of grace, Schleiermacher in no way means that Christ functions in our life as moral exemplar. He explicitly rejects this idea. Activity is not something we do on our own on the basis of an external example. It is faith, which is union with Christ: “Thus all real vital fellowship with Christ, in which He is in any sense taken as Redeemer, depends on the fact that living receptivity [*Empfänglichkeit*] for His influence is *already* present, and *continues* to be present” (§91.1; *CF* 371, slightly altered).

¹⁵² §110.1; *CF* 506.

¹⁵³ §112.1; *CF* 518.

Are good works also free? Even to pose this question is, he thinks, a “vain misunderstanding.”¹⁵⁴ This is the exact point at which he picks up his discussion (from §108.6) of the role of our living receptivity in relation to grace: “If the whole living receptivity, which is the state of the person undergoing conversion, is clearly a free state, so too is the will for the Kingdom of God arising from conversion a free state, because there is no will without freedom.”¹⁵⁵ To be continually susceptible to Christ’s influence is actively to will the Kingdom of God. In conversion, effectual grace turns our quiescent desire, which had been brought to the point of rest and made susceptible by preparatory grace, into an active will.

To what extent can good works be reckoned to the regenerate person? Such a question, according to Schleiermacher, betrays the very nature of faith, which is union (“a living fellowship”) with Christ.¹⁵⁶ It follows, then, that “what belongs to Christ in a good work cannot be separated from what belongs to the individual; for this would be to dissolve the fellowship.”¹⁵⁷ Schleiermacher thus searches for a new “formula” that “will bring out the participation of both.”¹⁵⁸ He returns to the grace of conversion, which is itself the beginning of sanctification, reminding us that there “Christ alone is active, the individual being merely in a state of living receptivity.”¹⁵⁹ In one undivided moment, effectual grace changes that lively receptivity into a lively spontaneity, the abiding principle for which is always faith in Christ. Schleiermacher explains,

Hence we must ascribe every moment of active faith to Christ, in so far as, in the analogy, he is that beginning [of sanctification]—that is to say, in so far as in that beginning [i.e., conversion] new life comes into being or increases; in short, in so far as the beginning includes progress. For if we could ourselves make the new life grow, then we could also make it originate. But just as in that turning-point the new person came into being, and the will for the kingdom of God which originated therein is our will, so too is that moment of the activity of faith, in so far as it is the expression of that will implanted within us, also ascribed to us and is our work.¹⁶⁰

This is not cooperative grace, he insists, because “the fact is not that divine grace is working along with what is a good work of our own, but that divine grace has here been at work from the beginning, and what is its own it effects by itself.”¹⁶¹ It is the ongoing work of effectual grace, not another kind of grace. In other words,

¹⁵⁴ §112.1; *CF* 519.

¹⁵⁵ §112.1; *KGA* 222; see *CF* 519.

¹⁵⁶ On this point, it is instructive to keep in mind how important Gal 2:20 is for Schleiermacher, even if he does not cite it here: “and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” See also 1 Cor 15:10.

¹⁵⁷ §112.2; *CF* 519.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ §112.2; *CF* 520.

¹⁶⁰ §112.2; *KGA* 222–23; see *CF* 520.

¹⁶¹ §112.2; *CF* 520.

misunderstandings occur and suspicions about so-called cooperative grace arise when faith is understood as other than a living fellowship with Christ and when a third kind of grace, distinct from effectual grace, is thought to apply to the life of grace. By rejecting any separation of the believer from Christ, of regeneration from sanctification, or of creation from preservation, Schleiermacher believes he has found a way around the debates surrounding "cooperation."

Does God reward good works? Schleiermacher dismisses this question as "superfluous."¹⁶² "The state of grace leaves no room for reward," he states matter-of-factly; "inward spirit and reward cannot really be related to each other."¹⁶³ In this regard, he follows the Protestant confessions in rejecting what was perceived to be the Catholic position on merit. That is not to say, however, that for Schleiermacher (or for the Protestant confessions) good works of the regenerate are not objects of divine pleasure; he simply insists that this be properly understood. According to Schleiermacher, it is not the good works in and of themselves that are pleasing to God, for they are always both good and sinful; rather, it is "that element in them which is an activity of faith and an expression of our living fellowship with Christ. Thus it is only the love in our good works that is pleasing to God."¹⁶⁴ Here, we find Schleiermacher stepping out of the *Fragestellung* in an interesting way. First, as we have seen before, he takes the Holy Spirit out of the equation. Good works are not properly understood as the work of the Holy Spirit but as arising out of the living fellowship between Christ and the regenerate Christian, a fellowship possible only within the corporate life of the (evangelical) church. Second, Schleiermacher identifies the basic criterion of good works and of that which is pleasing to God as faith in classical Protestant fashion, but he defines that faith in terms of love—and not only love of neighbor, but also love of God. Schleiermacher links faith and grace to love, which for him is "at once love to men and love to Christ and love to God; while at the same time it is Christ's love working in and through us."¹⁶⁵ Such a view is not so far from the Catholic emphasis on *caritas*.

■ Conclusion

Returning now to my three theses, I hope it is fair to say that the first thesis (that Schleiermacher does have a treatise on grace worthy of consideration) and the third (that his understanding of grace is based on an analogy with the incarnation) have been argued clearly enough that they need no summary remarks. It is admittedly a different matter with the second thesis, the argument for which has been implicit and intermittent throughout this essay. My contention is that *although Schleiermacher's treatise on grace is couched in polemical, anti-Catholic terms, in actuality it is not antithetical to Catholic views of grace, at least not in the usual ways*. As we

¹⁶² §112.3; *CF* 521.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ §112.3; *CF* 520.

¹⁶⁵ §112.3; *CF* 521.

have seen, he did explicitly criticize the position of the “Roman Church” on faith, conversion, and repentance, but he also conceded that comparing the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* with the Protestant confessions was perhaps unfair.¹⁶⁶ Also, as we have seen, he knew where the fault lines were and took great care to avoid what he assumed were Catholic views of free will, consent, cooperative grace, and merit.

In his treatise on grace, however, Schleiermacher’s energies were in fact much more focused on intra-Protestant polemics and on what he considered to be very problematic claims by the Protestant confessions than on Roman Catholic views. On the one hand, especially in his role as an advocate for the new united evangelical church of Prussia, he tried to reconcile (at least in the sense of contributing some clarity and coherence) competing and divergent claims of the various Protestant confessions. On the other hand, he struggled mightily with the issue of the binding authority of those confessions. As Wyman explains, “He denies that they have binding normative authority; they do not constitute a Protestant magisterium. Yet they must be taken seriously as initial statements of the distinctively Protestant perspective—a perspective that is subject to further development.”¹⁶⁷ Along these lines, Schleiermacher developed a doctrine of grace that is recognizably Protestant in its emphasis on conversion, in the role it assigns to the preached Word, in its situating the doctrine of grace against the backdrop of sin,¹⁶⁸ in the care with which it underscores the discontinuities between the unregenerate and the regenerate person, in the centrality it assigns to justification, in its insistence on totally unmerited grace, in its rejection of “cooperative grace,” and of course in its attention to Scripture.

On each of these points, however, Schleiermacher had real reservations with the conventional ways in which the issues had been framed, and he arrived at his own position, in most cases, by refusing to be pushed into an either/or decision. Instead, he stepped out of the polemics (whether intra-Protestant or anti-Catholic) and attempted to change the *Fragestellung*. This was necessary, he was convinced,

¹⁶⁶ See §108.1; *CF* 483. Historian John W. O’Malley, S.J. explains the complexity of sixteenth-century Roman Catholicism: “To be sure, Catholicism is diffuse, complex, and incoherent in ways different from early modern Protestantism. It was, for instance, doctrinally diffuse in that it did not have a single, clearly formulated teaching like justification by faith alone or, perhaps more significantly, ‘Scripture alone,’ to give it center, and it rather gloried in the fact. The doctrinal assertions at Trent covered a wide range of teachings with seemingly even hand. Those assertions found expression, moreover, in subtle and technical ‘committee documents’ that represented compromises and were thus incapable of packing the wallop of Luther’s tracts and polemics or even of Calvin’s *Institutes*” (*Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000] 122). He goes on to note the importance of religious orders and their effect on doctrine: they “operated as a separate corps of organized ministers alongside and often in conflict with bishops and the parochial clergy. No Protestant church had anything like them. . . . They had their own traditions of theology and piety” (*ibid.*, 124).

¹⁶⁷ Wyman, “The Role of the Protestant Confessions,” 357.

¹⁶⁸ Recall that Part Two is the “Explication of the facts of the religious self-consciousness, as they are determined by the antithesis” of sin and grace (Heading to Part Two, *CF* 260). Sin is the first aspect of the antithesis and is discussed in §§65–85; grace is the second aspect.

because of the new historical consciousness and discoveries in the natural sciences. In thus reframing the *Fragestellung*, Schleiermacher ultimately developed a doctrine of grace that, while still recognizably Protestant, also has interesting affinities with a Catholic understanding of grace. Eugene TeSelle's distinctions, noted above, may help to illustrate the point. TeSelle argued that in Catholic theology, "grace is not exhausted by its function of overcoming sin. God is gracious not only to man as sinner but also to man as man [sic]"; Catholic theology, in other words, tends to frame grace in terms of the contrast of "nature and grace."¹⁶⁹ The same could be said of Schleiermacher's treatise on grace. While he framed his treatise in terms of the antithesis of sin and grace (and he took this seriously, insisting that grace relieves us of the misery of sin), he also described grace in relation to the whole person. In other words, he found it necessary to talk about human nature, not in a static sense but in terms of that living receptivity and desire for God, which is that "indelible residuum in the human race of that original divine communication, which constitutes human nature."¹⁷⁰ Schleiermacher's treatise on grace also resonates with Catholic (and Eastern Orthodox) views of grace in the continuities (as well as the discontinuities) that it observes, in its refusal to see the human person as spiritually and morally "dead" before the grace of conversion, in its rejection of a forensic understanding of grace and justification, in its view of grace as uplifting and perfecting, in its understanding of the sanctified life as a life of progress, in its willingness to grant both free will and cooperation (although not "cooperative grace") to the human subject, in its emphasis on grace as love (not only love of neighbor but also the love of Christ and love of God that transforms the self), and in its fundamental insight that grace necessarily involves a mystical union with Christ.

In all these ways, Schleiermacher, rather than furthering anti-Catholic polemics, actually unwittingly laid out possibilities for a rapprochement between Protestants and Catholics on grace long before most were ready for it,¹⁷¹ possibilities which have not heretofore been noticed because of the neglect of Schleiermacher's treatise on grace and its incarnational view of grace.

¹⁶⁹ See note 10 above.

¹⁷⁰ §108.6; *KGA* 190–91; cf. *CF* 495; see pp. 161–62 above.

¹⁷¹ This is not the only case in which this is true. Schleiermacher had a profound influence, for instance, on the Catholic Tübingen School.

Neo-Confucian Hermeneutics at Work: CHENG Yi's Philosophical Interpretation of *Analects* 8.9 and 17.3*

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Introduction

In this article, I discuss the Song 宋 Neo-Confucian CHENG Yi's 程頤 (1033–1107) interpretation of two related controversial passages in the *Analects*, the recorded sayings of Confucius. The term “neo-Confucianism” was coined by Western scholars to refer to the Confucianism of the period from the Song dynasty to the Ming 明 dynasty (and sometimes through the Qing 清 dynasty). Among Chinese scholars, neo-Confucianism is most commonly referred to as the Learning of Principle (*li xue* 理學). Although before CHENG Yi and his brother CHENG Hao 程顥 (1032–1085) there were three other philosophers who are normally also regarded as neo-Confucians—SHAO Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077), ZHOU Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073), and ZHANG Zai 張載 (1020–1077)—we can justifiably regard the Cheng brothers as the real founders of neo-Confucianism in the sense that principle becomes the essential philosophical concept for the first time in their works.¹ There is no consensus among scholars as to the relationship between the philosophies of these two brothers. The traditional view regards them as substantially different due to the two different schools of neo-Confucianism that developed from their

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¹ For Shao, the essential concept is number; for Zhou, it is *taiji* 太極, the ultimate; and for Zhang, it is *qi* 氣, the vital energy.

teachings, the realistic school synthesized by ZHU Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) from the teachings of CHENG Yi and the idealist school culminating in WANG Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) from the teachings of CHENG HAO. I, however, tend to think that the philosophical positions of the two brothers are largely similar. Unfortunately, since CHENG Hao did not live as long as CHENG Yi, there is insufficient material to create a systematic picture of his view of the *Analects* passages with which this article will deal.

The two *Analects* passages in question are: 1) “Common people can (or: are permitted to) be made to follow it [*dao*, the Way] but cannot (or: are not permitted to) be made to know it” (*min ke shi you zhi bu ke shi zhi zhi* 民可使由之, 不可使知之) (8.9);² and 2) “only the wise above and the stupid below do not change” (*wei shangzhi yu xiayu buyi* 惟上智與下愚不移) (17.3).³ Critics of Confucius, particularly in the anti-Confucius Campaign during the Cultural Revolution of the 1970s, often regard these two passages as evidence that Confucius advocated a policy of keeping people in ignorance (*yumin* 愚民), while his defenders, particularly during the Confucian revival in Mainland China today, usually argue that the passages are merely Confucius’s lamentation over the fact that people are ignorant (*minyu* 民愚). So it seems that both critics and defenders of Confucius agree that Confucius regarded common people as ignorant, differing only over whether he held that people are originally ignorant (*minyu*) or that they are made ignorant (*yumin*). In CHENG Yi’s view, however, neither interpretation captures the true meaning of these two passages because both are content with providing a literal interpretation without an understanding of the normative principles embodied by the Confucian classics. In the following, I shall contrast CHENG Yi’s philosophical interpretations

² The following is a sample of representative English translations of this passage: “The Common people can be made to follow a path but not to understand it” (*The Analects* [trans. D. C. Lau; Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1979]); “You can make the people follow the Way, but you can’t make them understand it” (*The Analects* [trans. David Hinton; Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998]); “The common people can be induced to travel along the way, but they cannot be induced to realize (*zhi* 知) it” (*The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* [trans. Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr.; New York: Ballantine, 1998]); “People can be made to sprout (produce, act, follow), they cannot be commissioned to know” (*Confucian Analects* [trans. Ezra Pound; London: Peter Own, 1956]); “The common people can be made to follow it [the way]; they cannot be made to understand it” (*The Analects of Confucius* [trans. Arthur Waley; London: Allen & Unwin, 1971]); “The common people can be made to follow it, but they cannot be made to understand it” (*Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* [trans. Edward Slingerland; Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003]); “The people may be made to follow a path of action, but they may not be made to understand it” (*Confucius: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning & The Doctrine of the Mean* [trans. James Legge; New York: Dover, 1971]).

³ Some representative English translations of this passage are: “It is only the most intelligent and the most stupid who are not susceptible to change” (Lau); “Those of the loftiest wisdom and those of the basest ignorance: they alone never change” (Hinton); “Only the most wise (*zhi* 知) and the most stupid do not move” (Ames and Rosemont); “Only those of highest intelligence, and lowest simplicity do not shift” (Pound); “It is only the very wisest and the very stupidest who cannot change” (Waley); “Only the very wise and the very stupid do not change” (Slingerland); “There are only the wise of the highest class, and the stupid of the lowest class, who cannot be changed” (Legge).

of these two passages with more conventional interpretations and show that the former are superior to the latter, not as an apology for Confucianism but as a significant development thereof.

To better appreciate Cheng's unique interpretations of these two controversial passages, especially in contrast to those developed by Confucian scholars before and after him, it is helpful to have an overview of Cheng's hermeneutics of Confucian classics in a historical context. Before Cheng, the dominant Confucian hermeneutics of the classics was the so-called Han learning (*hanxue* 漢學). Han learning was developed during the Han dynasty (206–220 B.C.E.), but its influence continued through the Wei 魏, Jin 晉, Sui 隋, and Tang 唐 dynasties (third through tenth centuries C.E.), and, after an interruption of the neo-Confucian hermeneutics that CHENG Yi helped to establish, revived in the Qing 清 dynasty (1661–1900). Han learning, particularly its Old Text School,⁴ adopts a hermeneutic strategy that focuses on word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence, and chapter-by-chapter annotations and commentaries on Confucian classics and even annotations on and explanations of those annotations and commentaries. As scholars of Han learning were interested in detailed explanations of individual terms used in the classics, a complete Han commentary is often millions of words long, and it is not unusual for commentators to use tens or even hundreds of thousands of words just to explain the title or the first few words of a classic. For example, as CHENG Yi complains, they use 20,000–30,000 words just to explain the two title characters *Yao dian* 堯典.⁵

As the preceding comment illustrates, CHENG Yi was critical of Han learning. In his view, the need for so many words to explain a title or a short sentence is a sign that Han scholars do not understand the Way, and because they do not understand the Way, their overelaborate textual studies are simply “useless verbiage.”⁶ Through his criticism of Han Learning, Cheng made a great contribution to the development of the neo-Confucian hermeneutics of the classics, also known as the Song Learning. Instead of tedious textual studies, the Song Learning emphasizes philosophical understanding. Cheng argues that the classics are important because they are “carriers of the Way, just as tools are servants of their purpose.”⁷ This is because “sages create classics only to illuminate the Way.”⁸ Therefore, Cheng claims that

⁴ There are three such schools: the New Text school (*jin wen xue pai* 今文學派), the Old Text school (*gu wen xue pai* 古文學派), and the General Learning school (*tongxue pai* 通學派). See ZHOU Yutong 周予同, “漢學與宋學” (Han Learning and Song Learning), in *ZHOU Yutong jingxue shi lunzhu xuanji* 周予同經學史論著選集 (ed. ZHU Weizheng 朱維錚; Collected Works on the History of Confucian Hermeneutics; expanded edition; Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1996) 322–37.

⁵ See CHENG Hao 程顥 and CHENG Yi 程頤, *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (Collected Writings of the Two Chengs; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004; *Yishu*, fascicle 18) 232.

⁶ Ibid. (*Wenji*, *Yiwen*) 671.

⁷ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 6) 95.

⁸ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a) 13. It is not clear whether this passage is to be attributed to CHENG Yi or to CHENG Hao. Here I follow PANG Wanli 龐萬里, *Er Cheng de zhexue tixi* 二程的哲學體系 (The Philosophical System of the Two Chengs; Beijing: Beijing hangkong hangtian daxue chubanshe, 1992) 348.

“people today cannot study the classics without first understanding the normative principle (*yili* 義理).”⁹ In other words, in order to understand the Confucian classics properly, we must first understand the Way. The significance of this neo-Confucian hermeneutics lies not only in relation to the Han learning, which it aims to replace, but also in relation to contemporary Western hermeneutics, in comparison to which it may otherwise appear to be outdated. The central debate in contemporary Western hermeneutics is over the question as to whether an interpretation should aim to reveal the objective meaning of a text independent of its author and readers, or the original intention of the author independent of the text and its readers, or the pre-understanding of readers independent of the author and the text itself. Cheng unified the three by means of the concept of the Way, since for him the objective meaning of all Confucian classics is the Way, the original intention of their authors is to illuminate the Way, and the pre-understanding that readers project upon classics is their pre-understanding of the Way.

Since sages create classics to illuminate the Way and the classics transmit the Way, Cheng claims that, on the one hand, “nothing is more important than to study classics,”¹⁰ and on the other hand, “to study classics without knowing the Way is as useless as to work with tools without knowing the purposes they serve.”¹¹ So while it is important to study the classics in order to know the Way, it is also important to know the Way in order to study the classics. Cheng even goes so far as to claim that “people today cannot start to study classics if they do not already have some understanding of their underlying principle.”¹² How is this possible? Of course, Cheng acknowledges that there is a hermeneutic circle between understanding the classics and grasping the Way. However, Cheng also argues that, although the classics transmit the Way, the Way does not exist only in the classics. There are many other ways to approach the Way, such as studying history, engaging in human affairs, reflecting upon oneself, and investigating external things. Thus, there is also a multiple hermeneutic circle among these various approaches. One’s understanding of the Way through these other approaches will help one to understand the Way in the classics and vice versa. Since it is much more important to understand the underlying principle, the Way, than the literal meaning of the classics, Cheng argues that one who is good at learning should not be constrained by words. If you can make sense of the Way, “it is harmless even if you are wrong in interpreting the

⁹ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a) 13.

¹⁰ *Er Cheng Ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 1) 2.

¹¹ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 6) 95.

¹² Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a) 13. Commenting on this passage, Peter K. Bol argues that “the classics are ancient, and usage has changed. Anyone who had to study them to know tao would get stuck in the medium. . . . The true meaning of the classics can be understood only by those who know the truth already” (*This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T’ang and Sung China* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992] 308). We may modify this as saying that “the true meaning of the classics can be understood only by those who have already had some grasp of the truth,” as one does not need to understand the classics if he or she already knows the full truth contained therein.

literal meaning of some words.”¹³ Conversely, it is beneficial to cast doubts on, introduce changes to, and make deletions within the classics, and even to rearrange the whole Confucian canon, in order to make the literal meaning of the classics consistent with the fundamental principle of Confucianism.¹⁴

With this brief overview of Cheng’s neo-Confucian hermeneutics as an alternative to the Han Learning, we are now ready to examine how Cheng’s interpretations of the two *Analects* passages are philosophically significant in relation to the conventional interpretations.

■ Conventional Interpretations of *Analects* 8.9

In the above, I tentatively translated the passage from *Analects* 8.9, *min ke shi you zhi bu ke shi zhi zhi* 民可使由之，不可使知之， as “common people can (or: are permitted to) be made to follow it and cannot (or: are not permitted to) be made to know it,” to reflect the major point of disagreement in interpreting this passage. The meaning of the word *shi* 使 is clear: “to make; to cause” (since the sentence is in passive voice, it means “to be made; to be caused”). There has not been much serious disagreement regarding the meaning of the two verbs *you* 由 (to follow) and *zhi* 知 (to know) (although I shall argue that the most distinctive feature of Cheng’s interpretation is his unique interpretation of the word *zhi* 知), and there seems to be a general consensus that the word *zhi* 之 (it), the object of the two verbs, refers to the Way. Perhaps somewhat more controversial is the word *min* 民, here translated as “common people.” Some interpret the term as broadly as *ren* 人, “human beings,” so that the passage means that any human individual can (or: is permitted to) be made to follow it but cannot (or: is not permitted to) be made to know it.¹⁵ Others interpret *min* as narrowly as to refer to Confucius’s students other than the seventy two who are proficient in the six arts.¹⁶ Most commonly, *min* is understood to refer to those who are to be governed. The precise interpretation of *min*, however, is not crucial to understanding the passage. It is sufficient to understand the relationship between *min* and those who can (or are permitted to) make *min* follow the Way and yet cannot (or are not permitted) to make them know it. Although there will certainly be disagreements regarding the identity of the latter group as well, it suffices to say that they are those who not only follow but also know the Way, so that *min*, whoever they are, must be those who neither follow nor know it. Thus the major question remains why *min* can (or are permitted to) be made to follow the

¹³ *Er Cheng Ji* (Waishu, fascicle 6) 378.

¹⁴ For a more detailed discussion of CHENG Yi’s philosophical hermeneutics, see Yong Huang, “CHENG Yi’s Neo-Confucian Ontological Hermeneutics of Dao,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 27 (2000) 69–92.

¹⁵ See the interpretation in Qing dynasty scholar SHI You’s 史佑 *Jingyi zaji* 經義雜記 (Miscellaneous Notes on the Meanings of Classics), cited in CHENG Shude 程樹德 (1877–1944), *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋 (Collected Interpretations of the *Analects*; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990) 531.

¹⁶ See the comments by the Qing scholar LIU Baonan 劉寶楠 (1791–1855) in his *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 (Correct Meanings of the *Analects*), cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 532.

Way and yet cannot (or are not permitted to) be made to know it. The crucial issue here is whether the word *ke* 可 and its negation *bu ke* 不可 should be interpreted as “can” and “cannot,” respectively, or as “are permitted” and “are not permitted to,” respectively, as the term can have either meaning.

If the word *ke* means “be permitted to,” the passage can be read: “Common people are permitted to be made to follow the Way but are not permitted to be made to know it.” As noted above, many critics of Confucius and Confucianism accept this interpretation.¹⁷ It is also, however, accepted by some more sympathetic commentators. For example, the Qing dynasty scholar YAN Xizhai 顏習齋 (1635–1704) not only defended this interpretation but also argued against the alternative interpretation of the word *ke* to mean *neng* 能 (can). In his view, if the Way is made known to people,

then their ears and eyes will be deluded and their heart/mind will be misled. That is why it is not permitted to be made known to people. With this sagely learning getting lost, later Confucians have claimed that what is meant here is that people cannot be made to know and not that they are not permitted to be made to know. For this reason, everyone tries to invent ways to make people know it; the result is that both scholarship and the way of government are destroyed.¹⁸

In his *Lunyu zhu* 論語注 (Annotations on the *Analects*), the Jin 晉 dynasty scholar ZHANG Ping 張憑 related this interpretation to Confucius’s distinction between government by virtue and government by punitive laws:

When governed with virtue, everyone acts according to his (or her) nature. Everyone under heaven uses it [the Way] in their daily life without knowing it. This is why it is said that “[common people] are permitted to be made to follow it.” When, however, common people are governed with punitive laws so as to prevent them from doing wicked things, they would know such punitive laws and so would take care to get around them and do the wicked things in clever ways. That is why it is said that “[common people] are not permitted to be made to know it.” The point is that government should be run with virtue, so that people will easily follow with virtue. Government may not be run with punitive laws because common people will then know the methods used.¹⁹

Slingerland follows this interpretation, saying that it “accords well with the sentiment of [*Analects*] 2.3, when Confucius declares that ruling by a publicized legal code merely inspires the common people to devise devious ways to get around the law.”²⁰

¹⁷ See, for example, YANG Rongguo 楊榮國 (1907–1978), *Fandong jieji de shengren: Kongzi* 反動階級的聖人：孔子 (The Sage of the Reactionary Class: Confucius; Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1973) 59.

¹⁸ Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 533.

¹⁹ Cited in *ibid.*, 532.

²⁰ Slingerland, *The Analects*.

This interpretation, however, is problematic in at least two respects. First, linguistically, it attributes two different referents to the word *zhi* 之, “it,” within the same passage. As the object of the verb *you* 由 (to follow), *zhi* 之 refers to the Way or “virtue,” while as the object of the verb *zhi* 知 (to know), it refers to punitive laws. The original text, however, seems to intend a sharp contrast between what people can (or are permitted to) do and what they cannot (or are not permitted to) do: “to follow it” versus “to know it.” The word *zhi* 之, therefore, must have the same referent in both parts of the statement. Second, philosophically, such an interpretation amounts to saying that Confucius advocated a policy of keeping people in ignorance, which, as noted by CHEN Daqi 陳大齊 (1887–1983), “is contrary to Confucius’s thought. In two different places, [*Analects*] 9.19 and 14.28, Confucius says that the person who knows will not be deluded. On this principle, unless Confucius wished to keep people in delusion forever, he would not be unwilling to transform people from ignorance to knowledge.”²¹ In other words, if we accept this interpretation, we have to conclude that Confucius or the *Analects* is not consistent.²² In Chen’s view, the word *ke* refers to ability and *bu ke* refers to the lack thereof, so the *Analects* passage really means that common people “can” be made to follow the Way but “cannot” be made to know it.²³ This is the second common interpretation, which we shall now examine.

Most advocates of this second interpretation presume that common people cannot know the Way because they lack the intellectual capacity to do so. For example, in his *Lunyu zhu* 論語注 (Annotations on the *Analects*), the Han 漢 dynasty scholar ZHENG Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) explains that “the word *min* 民 really means *ming* 冥 (the stupid), who are at a remove from the way of humanity.”²⁴ The Qing Dynasty scholar ZHAO You 趙佑, while not regarding *min* as at a remove from humanity, likewise states in his *Sishu wengu lu* 四書溫故錄 (Notes from Reading the Four

²¹ CHEN Daqi, *Lunyu yijie* 論語臆解 (A Subjective Interpretation of the *Analects*; Taipei: Shangwu yingshuguan, 1996) 153. In one of the bamboo strips excavated at Guodian 郭店, *Zun deyi* 尊德義 (Respecting Virtue and Rightness)—which some scholars speculate may have been written around Confucius’s time—there is a related statement: “People may not be deluded.” See strip no. 31, in *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Bamboo Strips Excavated from the Chu Tombs at Guodian; Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998) 174.

²² This, of course, does not mean that we absolutely cannot accept this interpretation, as Confucius or the *Analects* may indeed be self-contradictory at times. However, unless we can find a more plausible interpretation, as John B. Henderson points out, we should adhere to the common commentarial assumption that the classics are coherent. See Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) 106.

²³ GUO Moruo 郭沫若 (1897–1978) also thinks that if we interpret *bu ke* as “not permitted to,” then in this passage Confucius must be advocating a policy of keeping people in ignorance, but this is obviously incompatible with Confucius’s consistent involvement in education. Accordingly, Confucius’s statement should be understood as factual rather than normative: people cannot be made to know it. See GUO Moruo, *Shi pipan shu* 十批判書 (Ten Critiques; Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1996) 100.

²⁴ Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 532.

Books) that common people are stupid: “The nature of all common people is good and so they can be made to follow the Way. The nature of common people is originally stupid and so they cannot be made to know it. So as to maintain order, rulers should discuss the Way among themselves and establish rules for people to follow. If so, everything will be in order.”²⁵ Most contemporary scholars also hold this view. For example, D. C. Lau argues,

Confucius did not disguise the fact that, in his view, the common people were very limited in their intellectual capacity. He said, “The common people can be made to follow a path but not to understand it” (8.9). They cannot understand why they are led along a particular path because they never take the trouble to study. . . . It is not surprising that Confucius should have taken such a view. . . . The common people are greatly handicapped. They rarely have the capacity and practically never the opportunity. When on the rare occasion they have both the capacity and the opportunity, they are unlikely to be able to put up with the hardship.²⁶

Although this is a popular interpretation, it is unlikely that it is indeed what Confucius meant. A famous passage in the *Analects* 15.39 states: “Education should be provided for all without distinction” (*you jiao wu lei* 有教無類), whether they are rich or poor, noble or lowly, with high or low intellectual abilities.²⁷ If Confucius indeed thought that common people are too stupid to know the Way, then he would have instead said that education should be provided for all those who have high enough intellectual abilities. Not only did he not say this, but his own career in education proves the opposite. Although we do not have entirely reliable sources,²⁸ we do learn from *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the [Grand] Historian), *Lü shi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Mister Lü’s Springs and Autumns), and other parts of the *Analects* that, among Confucius’s students, Zilu 子路 was originally “uncultivated” (*ye ren* 野人), Zigong 子貢 was engaged in commerce, Zhonggong’s 仲弓 father

²⁵ Cited in *ibid.*, 533.

²⁶ Lau, trans., *The Analects*, 36. HOU Wailu 侯外廬 (1930–1987) argues that this *Analects* passage shows that, for Confucius, common people do not have the capacity to have such knowledge. See HOU Wailu et al., *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* 中國思想通史 (A General History of Chinese Thought; vol. 1; Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1995) 169–70. TU Weiming also denies that Confucianism, like Daoism and Legalism, advocates a policy of keeping people in ignorance. Commenting on *Analects* 8.9, TU claims that this is “primarily a lamentation and is not a basic Confucian policy” (*Ruxue disan qi fazhan de qianjing wenti* 儒學第三期發展的前景問題 [The Prospect of the Third Epoch of the Development of Confucianism], in *TU Weiming wenji* 杜維明文集 [Collected Works of TU Weiming; Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 2002] 1:277).

²⁷ Commenting on this passage, Wing-tsit Chan says: “Confucius was the first to pronounce this principle in Chinese history. Among his pupils there were commoners as well as nobles, and stupid people as well as intelligent ones” (Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963] 44).

²⁸ See HU Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), *Zhongguo zhhexueshi dagang* 中國哲學史大綱 (Outline History of Chinese Philosophy), in *HU Shi xueshu wenji: Zhongguo zhhexueshi* 胡適學術文集：中國哲學史 (Collected Scholarly Works by HU Shi: History of Chinese Philosophy; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998) 1: 87–88.

was a “lowly person” (*jianren* 賤人), Zizhang 子張 was from a family of low status in the state of Lu 魯, and YAN Zhuju 顏涿聚 was a robber.²⁹ In fact, very few of Confucius’s students were from rich or noble families. Far from proving a waste of Confucius’s time, several of those mentioned here—Zilu, Zigong, and Zhonggong—were among his most accomplished students. XU Fuguan 徐復觀 (1904–1982), an important contemporary Confucian, thus argues that one of Confucius’s most important contributions to Chinese culture is that he “breaks free of all unreasonable distinctions among human beings and advocates that all humans are of one class and are equal.”³⁰ In addition to *Analects* 15.39, XU Fuguan cites a passage in *Analects* 18.6 to support his claim: “We cannot live together with birds and beasts. If I do not associate with humans, with whom shall I associate?” According to Xu’s reading, Confucius here simply separates humans from beasts without making any further distinctions among humans.

In this connection, it is worthwhile to take a look at *Analects* 7.7, which is normally understood to mean that Confucius never refused to teach anyone who came with a small present for tuition. According to HUANG Kan 皇侃 (488–545) and several other commentators, the phrase *shu xiu* 束脩 in this passage refers to a bundle of ten strips of dried meat (with *xiu* referring to dried meat and *shu* meaning ten). In his *Sishu shengyan* 四書臚言 (Additional Comments on the Four Books), the Qing dynasty scholar MAO Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623–1716) tells us that *shu xiu* is a small present that literati and officials (*shidafu* 士大夫) carried with them when they went abroad.³¹ If this is the case, then critics of Confucius may be correct in claiming that Confucius did not intend to provide education for all: although ten strips of dried meat might be deemed a small present for *shidafu*, it would certainly not have been “small” for poor people of his time (or even for some poor people in some remote areas of China today).³² If Confucius did, in fact, refuse to teach people who could not provide this gift, this would contradict his statement in *Analects* 15.39. There are, however, alternative interpretations of *shu xiu*. For example, in his *Lunyu ouji* 論語偶記 (Occasional Notes on the *Analects*), the Qing dynasty

²⁹ See CAI Shangsi 蔡尚思, *Kongzi sixiang tixi* 孔子思想體系 (Confucius’s System of Thought; Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1982) 192.

³⁰ XU Fuguan 徐復觀, *Zhongguo renxing lunshi: Xian Qin pian* 中國人性論史：先秦篇 (A History of Chinese Theories of Human Nature: The Pre-Qin Period; Taipei: Shangwu yingshuguan, 1999) 64.

³¹ Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 445.

³² See YANG Rongguo, *Fandong jieji de shengren*, 58; CAI Shangsi, *Kongzi sixiang tixi*, 193. According to CAI Shangsi, although *Analects* 15.39 indeed claims that education should be provided for all without distinctions, this is a principle that Confucius did not follow. In addition to the limit he set on access to education in terms of property, Cai also claims that Confucius set a limit in terms of class, as Confucius said that “common people can be made to follow the Way but cannot be made to understand it,” and a limit in terms of sect, as he asked people “not to associate with those who follow different ways” (*Analects* 15.40). Thus, “although in appearance Confucius talks about education for all without any discrimination, in reality there is still discrimination” (CAI Shangsi, *Kongzi sixiang tixi*, 193–94).

scholar FANG Guanxu 方觀旭 quotes ZHENG Xuan's 鄭玄 interpretation of *shu xiu* to mean "the age of 15" and cites uses of the term in this sense in *Yantielun* 鹽鐵論 (Discourses on Salt and Iron; Western Han dynasty), LIU Xiang's 劉向 (ca.77–76 B.C.E.) *Lienü zhuan* 烈女傳 (Biographies of Notable Women), and *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han).³³ This interpretation was also accepted by the Qing dynasty scholar HUANG Shisan 黃式三 (1789–1862) in his *Lunyü hou'an* 論語後案 (Later Notes on the *Analects*).³⁴ According to this interpretation, Confucius is not erecting a barrier to education based on property, but rather saying that he never refuses to teach anyone who is fifteen years old or above. Among contemporary scholars, LI Zehou 李澤厚 is one of the few to adopt this interpretation. Li notes that it is consistent with *Analects* 2.4, in which Confucius says that he sets the goal on learning at the age of fifteen.³⁵

Since neither of the two conventional interpretations of *Analects* 8.9—which focus on the two different meanings of the word *ke* and its negation—seems consistent with Confucius's general philosophy, other scholars have attempted to produce a less problematic text by punctuating the passage differently. According to the traditional punctuation, on which the above two conventional interpretations are based, this passage is divided into two parallel and contrasting parts: *min ke shi you zhi* 民可使由之, *bu ke shi zhi zhi* 不可使知之. In his *Lunyü ji* 論語稽 (Examination of the *Analects*), the Qing dynasty scholar HUAN Maoyong 宦懋庸 suggests that the passage should rather be read, *min ke* 民可, *shi you zhi* 使由之; *bu ke* 不可, *shi zhi zhi* 使知之, meaning, "if people approve of it/them (rules proposed by government), then make people follow it/them; if people do not approve of it/them, then make them know it/them." This interpretation makes some sense, but as YANG Bojun 楊伯峻 has noted, Huan's punctuation renders the sentence ungrammatical, as the object of the verb *shi* 使, presumably "people," is missing from both clauses. If Huan's interpretation were correct, the passage should have read, *min ke* 民可, *shi zhi you zhi* 使之由之; *bu ke* 不可, *shi zhi zhi zhi* 使之知之.³⁶

³³ Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyü jishi*, 447.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 446.

³⁵ LI Zehou 李澤厚, *Lunyü jindu* 論語今讀 (Reading the *Analects* Today; Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu gongsi, 1999) 171. Here, the "learning" refers to "great learning," the learning of the Way, in contrast to "elementary learning" (*xiaoxue* 小學), the learning of language. Thus CHENG Yi also tells us that "in ancient times people started elementary learning at the age of eight and great learning at the age of fifteen" (*Er Cheng ji* [Yishu, fascicle 15], 166). Admittedly, CHENG Yi himself does not follow this interpretation of the *Analects*. Commenting on this passage in his *Lunyü jie* 論語解 (Interpretation of the *Analects*), he simply says that Confucius never refused to teach anyone who came with *li* (*yi li lai zhe* 以禮來者) (*Er Cheng ji* [Jingshuo, fascicle 6], 1144). It is not clear whether he means a gift or propriety by the word *li* 禮. It is worth noting, however, that CHEN Daqi 陳大齊 mentions the interpretation of *shu xiu* as a type of propriety: self-discipline. See CHEN Daqi, *Kongzi xueshuo* 孔子學說 (Confucius's Doctrines; Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1984) 280. This interpretation is also consistent with *Analects* 15.39.

³⁶ See YANG Bojun 楊伯峻, *Lunyü yizhu* 論語譯注 (Translation and Annotation of the *Analects*; Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1980) 81.

Changing the punctuation of this passage has become a popular procedure among contemporary Chinese scholars. Here are a few more representative examples: 1) *min ke shi* 民可使, *you zhi* 由之; *bu ke shi* 不可使, *zhi zhi* 知之, meaning, “If common people follow the virtuous ruler, leave them alone; if common people do not follow the virtuous ruler, let them know”;³⁷ 2) *min* 民, *ke shi you zhi* 可使由之, *bu ke shi zhi zhi* 不可使知之, meaning, “for common people, (rulers) should use (virtue) to guide them and not use it to force them”;³⁸ 3) *min ke shi* 民可使, *you zhi bu ke* 由之不可, *shi zhi zhi* 使知之, meaning, “common people can be forced, but cannot be allowed to act according to their will. They should be made to know the Way”;³⁹ 4) *min ke shi you zhi* 民可使由之? *Bu* 不. *Ke shi zhi zhi* 可使知之, meaning, “Can common people be left alone? No. They should be made to know.”⁴⁰ It should be noted that all these recent interpretations based on alternative punctuations of the sentence in the *Analects* have been proposed in the context of contemporary China, where many Confucian scholars have been trying to recover the true Confucian spirit and to promote a positive image of Confucius in the shadow of the anti-Confucius campaign during the Cultural Revolution. Thus, they all try to provide favorable readings of this difficult passage. However, the weakness of these interpretations is also clear from their proponents’ criticisms of one another, which reveal them all to be forced and implausible. It is in this context that we can best appreciate the significance of the philosophical interpretation of the same passage by CHENG Yi, who likewise aimed to promote Confucianism in a society profoundly influenced by Buddhism.

■ CHENG Yi’s Interpretation of *Analects* 8.9

One of CHENG Yi’s students asked him about *Analects* 8.9: “‘Common people can (or: are permitted to) be made to follow it but cannot (or: are not permitted to)

³⁷ YU Zhihui 俞志慧, “*Luny Taibo* ‘Min ke shi you zhi bu ke shi zhi zhi’ zhang xinjie 《論語》泰伯‘民可使由之不可使知之’章心解” (Interpretation of *Analects* 8.9), *KongMeng yuekan* (1997) 1; see also WU Pi 吳丕, “Zai lun rujia ‘shi min’ sixiang 再論儒家‘使民’思想” (On *Analects* 8.9 Again), *Guangming ribao*, June 3, 2000. For criticism of this interpretation, see ZHOU Qian 周乾, “Ye lun min ke shi you 也論民可使由” (Also on *Analects* 8.9), *Guangming ribao*, October 24, 2000.

³⁸ PENG Zhongde 彭忠德, “Ye shuo ‘min ke shi you zhi’ zhang 也说‘民可使由之’章” (Also on *Analects* 8.9), *Guangming ribao*, May 16, 2000; see also PANG Pu 龐樸, “Shi you shi zhi jie 使由使知解” (Interpretation of *Analects* 8.9), *Guangming Daily*, October 22, 1999. For criticism of this interpretation, see YIN Zhenhuan 尹振環, “Bie wujie ‘min bu ke shi zhi zhi’ 別誤解‘民不可使知之’” (Do Not Misunderstand *Analects* 8.9), *Guangming ribao*, July 18, 2000, and WU Pi, “Zai lun rujia ‘shi min’ sixiang.”

³⁹ KONG Deming 孔德明, “Li jing bian zhi yu Kongzi yanjiu 離經辨志與孔子研究” (Distinguishing Intention Independent of the Text and the Study of Confucius), in *Chuantong wenhua de zonghe yu chuangxin* 傳統文化的綜合與創新 (Synthesis and Creation in Traditional Culture; Beijing: Jiaoyu kexue chubanshe, 1990). For criticism of this interpretation, see PENG Zhongde, “Ye shuo ‘min ke shi you zhi’ zhang.”

⁴⁰ See WANG Changming 王昌銘, “Dui ‘min ke shi you zhi’ de liji 對民可使由之的理解” (Understandings of *Analects* 8.9), in *Language and Character Weekly* 語言文字週報, August 24, 2004. Wang himself points out some problems with this reading in the same article.

be made to know it.' Is this because sages do not want to make people know it or because people themselves are unable to know it?" The student is asking CHENG Yi to choose between the two conventional interpretations discussed above: either people are not permitted to know it or people are unable to know it. CHENG Yi replied: "It is not that sages do not want people to know it. The reason that sages establish their teaching is to let everyone know about it so that everyone can become worthy. Sages, however, can only make people follow it. How can they make them fully understand it (*jin zhi zhi* 盡知之)? This is because sages cannot do it."⁴¹ It seems that CHENG Yi is simply siding with those who interpret the word *ke* as "can."⁴² This is what CHENG Yi is generally thought to believe, because this view was popularized largely through ZHU Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) *Lunyu jizhu* 論語集注 (Collected Annotations of the *Analects*), in which a similar passage of CHENG Yi's is quoted from his annotation of *Analects* 8.9. ZHU Xi prefaces this quotation with his own interpretation: "What people can be made to do is an 'ought' (*dangran* 當然), while what people cannot be made to know is a 'why' (*suoyiran* 所以然)."⁴³ *Suoyiran* is much more difficult to know than *dangran*; common people lack the ability to know it.⁴⁴

In his reply to the student's question, however, CHENG Yi does not simply choose one of the two alternatives provided: either that sages do not want to make people know the Way, or that people cannot know it. Instead, he says that it is because "sages are unable to do it." This is most interesting. We have noted that *bu ke* can either mean "not be permitted to" or "cannot." There is no doubt that CHENG Yi understands it in the latter sense. So far, however, we have not taken note of the fact that when a negative sentence is cast in the passive voice, as in the sentence "A cannot be made to do *x* (by *B*)," the reason for the "cannot" can either be that *A* lacks the ability to do *x* or that *B* lacks the ability to make *A* to do *x*. So the reason that people cannot be made (presumably by sages) to know the Way can be due either to the people's lack of ability to know the Way or to the sages' lack of ability to make people know it. Perhaps because it seems derogatory to suggest that sages might lack some ability, almost all commentators who choose to interpret *bu ke* as "cannot" assume that it is the people who lack the ability. Yet, in the above quoted

⁴¹ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 18) 220.

⁴² Thus CHENG Yi states: "Common people are permitted to be enlightened but not to be made stupid, to be taught but not intimidated; to follow but not be forced; to be made to do things but not cheated" (*Er Cheng ji* [*Yishu*, fascicle 25] 319).

⁴³ ZHU Xi 朱熹, *Lunyu jizhu* 論語集注 (Collected Annotations of the *Analects*), in *Sishu wujing* 四書五經 (Four Books and Five Classics; Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1985) 1:33.

⁴⁴ Along the same lines, CHEN Daqi argues that in order to make people do anything, it is also necessary for them to have some knowledge, the knowledge of how to do it. In ZHU Xi's terminology, this is knowledge of *dangran*. They do not, however, need to have knowledge of why. In ZHU Xi's terminology, this is knowledge of *suoyiran*. Common people have very limited intellectual abilities and so can only know the former but not the latter. On this point, see CHEN Daqi, *Lunyu yijie*, 154.

passage, CHENG Yi makes it unmistakably clear that it is because of the sages' lack of ability that people cannot be made to know the Way. If so, can we say, following PANG Pu 龐樸, that rather than regarding common people as ignorant (*minyu* 民愚), CHENG Yi regards sages as ignorant (*shengren zi yu* 聖人自愚)?⁴⁵

In order to answer this question, we must understand why CHENG Yi believes that it is sages who lack the ability to make people know the Way; and in order to understand this, we must appreciate Cheng's distinction between knowledge (attained) by hearing and seeing (*wenjian zhi zhi* 聞見之知) and knowledge of/as virtue (*dexing zhi zhi* 德性之知). In Cheng's view, the significant distinction between these two types of knowledge is that knowledge by hearing and seeing is superficial in the sense that it does not incline us to act accordingly, while knowledge of/as virtue is profound in the sense that it inclines us to act accordingly. Thus, he states: "When knowledge is profound, action will be thorough. No one ever knows without being able to act. If one knows without being able to act, the knowledge is superficial. Because they know the danger, people do not eat poisonous herbs when hungry and do not tread on water and fire. People do evil things simply because they lack knowledge."⁴⁶ It is a contradiction, in his view, to claim that one knows and yet is unable to act: "So if one knows what is immoral and still does it, this is not genuine knowledge. If it is genuine knowledge, one will certainly not act immorally."⁴⁷ Clearly, then, in CHENG Yi's view, what sages are unable to give people is not knowledge gained by hearing and seeing—people can be instructed in this type of knowledge—but knowledge of/as virtue, the knowledge that will incline people to act appropriately.

Why are sages unable to give people knowledge of/as virtue? CHENG Yi tells us: "Knowledge from seeing and hearing is not knowledge of/as virtue. It results from contact between one thing and another thing and therefore is not internal. The knowledge of those erudite and skillful persons belongs to this (category). Knowledge of/as virtue does not rely upon hearing and seeing."⁴⁸ According to this distinction, while knowledge by seeing and hearing is external, knowledge of/as virtue is internal and comes from one's inner experience. Thus, Cheng claims that "learning, generally speaking, cannot be obtained through knowledge by hearing. One can obtain it only by silently apprehending it in one's own heart/mind (*mo shi xin tong* 默識心通)."⁴⁹ In CHENG Yi's view, *mo shi xin tong* is not easy: "It is easy to learn but difficult to know; it is easy to know, but it is difficult to know by personal experience (*ti er de zhi* 體而得之)."⁵⁰ Here the word *ti* 體, referring to that

⁴⁵ See PANG Pu, "Shi you shi zhi jie."

⁴⁶ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 15) 164.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a) 16. It is not entirely clear whether this passage should be attributed to CHENG Yi or to CHENG Hao. However, on the basis of similar passages that are clearly attributed to CHENG Yi, we can reasonably assume that it belongs to CHENG Yi.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 317.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 17) 178.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 321.

by which one can personally attain knowledge of/as virtue, is extremely important to Cheng in particular and to Confucianism in general.⁵¹ As Tu Weiming 杜維明 correctly warns us, knowledge attained by *ti* does not come from one's body. The word *ti* here functions as both noun and verb. As a noun, it refers to *xin* 心, the heart/mind, which Mencius calls *dati* 大體 (literally, "the great body") in contrast to the physical body, which he calls *xiaoti* 小體 (literally, "the small body").⁵² This is why Cheng states in the previously quoted passage that "one can obtain it only by apprehending it in one's own heart/mind (*xin* 心)." For example, Confucius praises Yanzi 顏子 for being able to be *ren* 仁 for a few months at a time. CHENG Yi argues that the distinction between Yanzi and others is that the latter "have only knowledge of hearing and seeing and not knowledge from their own heart/mind, while Yanzi can grasp *ren* firmly without losing it because he gets it from his own heart/mind."⁵³ As a verb, *ti* refers to the activity of the heart/mind. Here it is vital to understand the "heart" function of the *xin* in its role in obtaining knowledge of/as virtue. Knowledge gained by seeing and hearing does not come merely from one's sensory organs. It is also the result of the "mind" function of the *xin*, as it is something that one must understand, justify, and prove. Nevertheless, it is only when knowledge is grasped also by the "heart" function of the *xin* that it can become knowledge of/as virtue, the knowledge that inclines one to act. Thus, Cheng states that "if one gets the Way from one's heart/mind, one can manifest it in one's body."⁵⁴

With this distinction between the two types of knowledge,⁵⁵ we are in a better position to understand why sages lack the ability to make people know the Way. Knowledge of the Way belongs to what CHENG Yi calls "knowledge of/as virtue."

⁵¹ *Mencius* (trans. D. C. Lau; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970; translation modified) 6A15. Perhaps it is from CHENG Yi's notion of *ti er de zhi* that Tu Weiming developed his conception of *tizhi* 體知, a subject on which he has recently written quite extensively (see the various articles in *Tu Weiming wenji*, vol. 5). Although the word *ti* literally means "body", as Tu correctly points out, its meaning is not fully conveyed by this English word. Tu explains that "recognition through *ti* (*tiren* 體認), awareness through *ti* (*ticha* 體察), justification through *ti* (*tizheng* 體證), understanding through *ti* (*tihui* 體會), tasting through *ti* (*tiwei* 體味), appreciation through *ti* (*tiwan* 體玩), inquiry through *ti* (*tijiu* 體究), and knowledge through *ti* (*tizhi* 體知) are all very different from knowledge, observation, verification, taste, and understanding in general sense" (*Tu Weiming wenji*, 5:331–32).

⁵² It is interesting to note that, while in the Western philosophical tradition, body and mind have usually been considered as two separate entities, in this Confucian tradition, they are both regarded as *ti*: one is the small *ti*, and one is the great *ti*.

⁵³ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 8) 1154.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a), 20. Some scholars attribute this passage to CHENG Hao. It is difficult but also not imperative to determine to whom it should be attributed, since the idea of *zide* was advocated by both brothers.

⁵⁵ For a more detailed discussion of Cheng's distinction between these two types of knowledge and its philosophical implications, see Yong Huang, "How Is Weakness of the Will Not Possible? CHENG Yi's Neo-Confucian Conception of Moral Knowledge," in *Educations and Their Purposes: A Philosophical Dialogue Among Cultures* (ed. Roger Ames and Peter Herschok; Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008).

Unlike knowledge attained through hearing and seeing, knowledge of/as virtue must not only be understood by one's mind but also experienced in one's heart, although mind and heart are simply two different functions of the same *xin*. So while sages certainly can teach people about the Way and people may also understand the teaching in their minds, until people experience it within their own hearts so that they are willing to act accordingly, the sages' teachings will remain merely knowledge from seeing and hearing to them. By its very nature, knowledge of/as virtue cannot be taught but has to be obtained by oneself (*zide* 自得). Thus, *zide* becomes one of CHENG Yi's most important ideas. In his view, "nothing is more important than attaining it on one's own through learning. To attain it on one's own is not to attain it from outside."⁵⁶ To say that one must attain it on one's own, of course, does not mean that one does not need to be taught by others. The point is that if one does not personally experience what is taught by others, it remains merely a piece of information, which one may fully understand and yet not be ready to act upon. In order for knowledge to be one's own, so that one not only understands but also firmly believes and is prepared to act on it, one must attain it on one's own. Thus, since the classics contain the sages' teachings, CHENG Yi states, "to study classics is the best way to learn. If, however, one does not attain it [the Way] on one's own, then even if one goes through the Five Classics thoroughly, there is nothing but empty words."⁵⁷ When asked how learners can *zide*, CHENG Yi replies: "If learners take time internally in appreciating and experiencing the sage's teaching, then they will attain it themselves. Learners should search deeply in the *Analects*, regarding the questions of Confucius's students as their own questions and regarding the sage's replies as if they were hearing them today. If they do so, they will naturally attain it."⁵⁸

So, according to CHENG Yi, *Analects* 8.9 does not mean that people are not permitted to know the Way but that people cannot be made to know it; people cannot be made to know the Way not because they lack the ability to know it, but because sages lack the ability to make people know it; and sages lack the ability to make people know it not because they are deficient, lacking in power or knowledge that they should have, but because the type of knowledge relevant here is knowledge of/as virtue, which, by its very nature, has to be attained on one's own. Thus, in Cheng's view, to ask sages to make people know the Way is to ask them to do something logically impossible: to provide people with something that, by its very nature, people can only attain on their own. This interpretation certainly makes sense. Before we conclude our discussion of CHENG Yi's interpretation of this *Analects* passage, however, it would be worthwhile to say a few words regarding possible objections to it. A common criticism of CHENG Yi's interpretations of Confucian classics is that he imposes general philosophical ideas

⁵⁶ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 1) 316.

⁵⁷ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 1) 2.

⁵⁸ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 22a) 279.

on the texts rather than engaging in careful textual analysis. In this particular case, for example, it might be argued that the central concepts that CHENG Yi invokes, such as “knowledge of/as virtue” and “attaining it on one’s own,” are absent from Confucius’s *Analects*. Admittedly, Confucius does not make the distinction between knowledge of/as virtue and knowledge by hearing and seeing. I do not, however, think it unreasonable to suppose that Confucius’s “knowledge of the Way” is not merely intellectual but also something that inclines one to act. This can be seen from the close connection between *zhi* 知 (knowledge), on the one hand, and *ren* 仁 (humanity) and *yi* 義 (rightness), on the other. When asked about knowledge, Confucius replied, “A person who does his best to work for the rightness due to people . . . can be regarded as having knowledge.”⁵⁹ Here, in Confucius’s view, knowledge has to be related to the moral action of *yi*. On the one hand, he argues that a person who has knowledge must choose *ren*. Thus, he argues that we cannot “consider people as having knowledge if they do not choose to settle in *ren* 仁,”⁶⁰ and that “the person who has knowledge seeks *ren*.”⁶¹ On the other hand, he argues that a person of *ren* must have knowledge: “Without knowledge, how can one be *ren*?”⁶² When Confucius laments that “there are few people who know virtue,”⁶³ what he has in mind is clearly not people who have heard about virtue (knowledge by hearing and seeing) but people who are inclined to act by their knowledge of virtue. In this sense, it can be argued that CHENG Yi’s idea of knowledge of/as virtue (*dexing zhi zhi*) has its origin in the *Analects*.⁶⁴

Now, let us look at CHENG Yi’s idea of attaining knowledge on one’s own. In order to have knowledge of/as virtue, CHENG Yi argues that we cannot rely upon hearing and seeing but only upon *mo shi xin tong* 默識心通. Here, *mo shi xin tong* is derived from *mo er shi zhi* 默而識之, “to silently gain knowledge from inside,” which Confucius identifies as one of his own traits in *Analects* 7.2. In his commentary on this *Analects* passage, CHENG Yi explains that by *mo shi*, Confucius means “to gain knowledge within oneself” (*you zhu ji* 有諸己).⁶⁵ This idea of *mo shi xin tong* or *mo er shi zhi* is closely related to CHENG Yi’s important concept of attaining (knowledge) on one’s own (*zide*), an idea that he adopts from the *Mencius*: “Superior persons deeply pursue the Way in order to attain it on their own (*zide*). When they

⁵⁹ *Analects* 6.22; English translation based on the Chinese version annotated by YANG Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu*, throughout this article.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 4.2. In *Analects* 4.1 Confucius states, “Of neighborhoods, humaneness (*ren*) is the most beautiful. How can a person be considered wise who, when having choices, does not settle in humaneness?”

⁶² *Ibid.*, 5.19.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15.4.

⁶⁴ Hall and Ames’s translation of *zhi* 知 as “realize” captures this sense of knowledge, as “to realize the *tao* is to experience, to interpret, and to influence the world in such a way as to reinforce, and where appropriate extend, a way of life established by one’s cultural precursors” (David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* [Albany: SUNY Press, 1987] 227).

⁶⁵ *Er Cheng ji* (*Jingshuo*, fascicle 6) 1144.

attain it on their own, they will be at ease in it; when they are at ease in it, they can draw deeply on it; when they draw deeply on it, they can make use of it wherever they turn. That is why superior persons want to attain it on their own.”⁶⁶ It is true that we do not find this idea of attaining it on one’s own in Confucius’s *Analects*, but in CHENG Yi’s view, the idea is implicit there. When commenting on *Analects* 7.8 in his *Lunyu jie* 論語解 (Interpretation of the *Analects*), he further states: “‘Do not teach people who are not eager to learn or anxious to explain themselves.’ This means to teach only when students are sincere. ‘When I have pointed out one corner of a square to people and they do not come back with the other three, I will not point it out to them a second time.’ This means to wait for the students to attain it on their own (*zide*) after they are taught.”⁶⁷ In another comment on the same passage, CHENG Yi emphasizes the idea of *si* 思, normally translated as “thinking”: “When Confucius teaches people, he ‘does not teach people who are not eager to learn or not anxious to express themselves’ [*Analects* 7.8]. For knowledge will not be solid when taught to people who are not eager to learn and do not express themselves. When they are eager to learn and express themselves, they will be energetic. Learners need deep *si*.”⁶⁸ Learners need deep *si* because *si* is crucial to attaining knowledge on one’s own. When asked how people can attain knowledge on their own, CHENG Yi simply replies: “*si*.”⁶⁹ In Cheng’s view, it is for this reason that Confucius says that “to learn without *si* will be bewildering, and to *si* without learning will put one in peril.”⁷⁰ We have to understand that *si* for CHENG Yi does not merely refer to intellectual thinking but also to inner reflective experience. Although he sometimes invokes them together, he draws a distinction between *si* and *lü* 慮. In his view, it is through *si* that one can attain knowledge on one’s own, and “to act after attaining it on one’s own is different from acting after *lü*. Once one is able to attain it on one’s own, everything becomes as natural as using one’s hands to lift things. Through *lü*, however, one cannot reach *zide* and one will feel some unnaturalness, just like using a stick to lift things.”⁷¹

⁶⁶ *Mencius* 4B14.

⁶⁷ *Er Cheng ji* (*Jingshuo*, fascicle 6) 1144. In developing his idea of attaining knowledge on one’s own, CHENG Yi was also inspired by *Analects* 6.27: “‘Superior persons are broadly versed in learning and regulated by rules of propriety. Thus they will not overstep what is right.’ This shows that they have not attained it on their own” (*Er Cheng ji* [*Yishu*, fascicle 6] 95). The passage is not attributed specifically to CHENG Yi. It is difficult to determine to whom it should be attributed because the idea of *zide* was advocated by both brothers. CHENG Hao, for example, stated: “What is crucial in learning is attaining it on one’s own. . . . Therefore Confucius says that ‘when I have pointed out one corner of a square to anyone and he does not come back with the other three, I will not point it out to him a second time’” (*Er Cheng ji* [*Yishu*, fascicle 11] 122). In CHENG Hao’s view, only by interpreting this *Analects* passage in this way can it be made consistent with Confucius’s self-description: “to teach without growing weary” (*Analects* 7.2, 7.34).

⁶⁸ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 18) 208.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 22a) 296.

⁷⁰ *Analects* 2.15.

⁷¹ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a) 22. The passage is not attributed specifically to CHENG Yi. It

■ The Conventional Interpretation of *Analects* 17.3

We have argued that *Analects* 8.9 does not mean that people are too stupid to know the Way or that sages are too deficient to make people know the Way, but that knowledge of the Way, by its very nature, has to be attained by learners themselves. If so, the question arises as to whether everyone has the ability to attain knowledge of the Way by him- or herself. Confucius seems to deny this in *Analects* 17.3: "Only the wise above and the stupid below do not change." It is therefore important to discuss CHENG Yi's interpretation of this *Analects* passage along with *Analects* 8.9. In order to appreciate the uniqueness of Cheng's interpretation, it will be helpful to begin with the conventional interpretation of this passage and its drawbacks.

One controversial issue in interpreting this passage is what Confucius means by "wise" and "stupid": Do these terms refer to intellectual ability or to moral quality? In his essay, "Lun xing pian 論性篇" (On Nature), Qing Scholar RUAN Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) argues that "wise" and "stupid" here do not refer to moral good and evil, but to intellectual abilities: "The stupid are not evil. The wise are good, but the stupid are also good."⁷² In connection with *Analects* 16.9, in which Confucius contrasts people who are born with knowledge, people who know as a result of learning, people who learn after being vexed with difficulties, and people who do not learn even after being vexed with difficulties, CHEN Daqi argues that Confucius's main purpose is to show that "there are different levels of inborn intellectual ability. . . . Those who are born with knowledge have the highest intellectual ability, those who know by learning have lower intellectual ability, and those who learn after being vexed with difficulty and those who do not learn even after being vexed with difficulty . . . have very low intellectual ability."⁷³ TU Weiming holds the same view. Commenting on this *Analects* passage, he claims,

this does not mean that Confucians pay special attention to the wise above and the stupid below but that they are not concerned with the wise above and the stupid below, because the wise above comprise a very small percentage of the human population, perhaps just people like Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu, while the stupid below are those who are unable to reflect and live their lives at all. In contemporary physiological and psychological terms, they are mentally handicapped people or even the severely retarded. The great majority, including Confucius himself, is between the wise above and the stupid below.⁷⁴

I think that this understanding of "wise" and the "stupid" as purely intellectual traits is not correct. *Zhi* 知 is an important idea in the *Analects*. Confucius's interest, however, is in moral knowledge. Moral knowledge, of course, also depends on

is, however, consistent with other passages in which CHENG Yi discusses *zide*.

⁷² Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 1185.

⁷³ CHEN Daqi, *Kongzi xueshuo lunji* 孔子學說論集 (Collected Essays on Confucius's Doctrines; Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1970) 86.

⁷⁴ TU Weiming, *Ruxue disan qi fazhan de qianjing wenti*, 280.

intellectual ability, but everyone possesses the intellectual ability needed to be good. In this sense, on the one hand, it is easier to gain moral knowledge of/as virtue than to attain scientific knowledge (for example), because everyone is born with the ability to attain the former, but not the latter; on the other hand, it is more difficult to gain moral knowledge of/as virtue than to obtain scientific knowledge, as moral knowledge requires *xin* to perform both the function of mind and that of heart.⁷⁵ I therefore think it more fitting to understand the terms “wise” and “stupid” here in their moral rather than intellectual senses. Most commentators share this view. Han scholars JIA Yi 賈誼 (200–168 B.C.E.) and WANG Chong 王充 (29–97 C.E.), for example, argue that “the wise” refers to good people, while “the stupid” refers to evil people. In his *Sishu fanshen lu* 四書反身錄 (Reflections upon the Four Books), Qing Scholar LI Zhongfu 李中孚 (1627–1705) expounds on this view in some detail:

The wise above understand the good and live a sincere life and will not change throughout their lives. The stupid below are only concerned with fame and personal benefit to the end of their lives. Is it not that they do not change? Those who are slow intellectually can preserve their good heart, do good things, and be good people. So, while intellectually slow, they are the wise above. Those who are quick-witted, if they harbor evil intentions, do bad things, and are unwilling to be good people, are the stupid below.⁷⁶

With such a moral rather than intellectual understanding of “the wise above” and “the stupid below,” most commentators interpret this *Analects* passage in connection with two other related passages. One is *Analects* 16.9, mentioned above: “Those who are born with knowledge are above; next are those who know by learning; next again are those who learn after being vexed by difficulties; and those who do not learn even after being vexed by difficulties are common people below.” For example, in *Wen zi tang ji* 問字堂集 (Collection of Essays from the Hall of Inquiry into Characters) the Qing scholar SUN Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818) argues that the wise above and the stupid below in *Analects* 17.3 refer, respectively, to those who are born with knowledge and those who do not learn even after being vexed with difficulties. Those who know by learning and those who learn after being vexed by difficulties are those between the wise above and the stupid below, the people in the middle (*zhongren* 中人) mentioned in the other related passage: “You can talk about higher learning with people above the middle but not with people below the middle.”⁷⁷ Commentators then apply these three categories—the wise

⁷⁵ After discussing the same paragraph from the *Mencius*, Tu Weiming correctly points out that, “while it is perfectly understandable that a respectable person may not be aware of the unrealizable potential in his nature, such as scientific and artistic talents, it is inconceivable, in the Mencian sense, that a mature member of our society can be ignorant of his germs and, therefore, not be responsible for his acts as a moral agent” (Tu Weiming, “Akrasia and Self-Cultivation in Mencius,” in *Philosophy and Culture* [ed. Venant Cauchy; Montreal: Ed-Montmorency, 1983] 4:222–23).

⁷⁶ Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 1188.

⁷⁷ *Analects* 6.21.

above, the stupid below, and average people in the middle—to the immediately preceding passage: “People are alike by their inborn nature but become different from each other by practice.”⁷⁸ It is clear that there is a connection between these two passages, and some commentators even claim that 17.2 and 17.3 were originally a single chapter. The question is how to understand this connection. According to the conventional interpretation, 17.2 refers to the majority people in the middle who can become good or bad depending upon their personal actions, while 17.3 refers to exceptional people at the two extremes, the wise above (often translated “the wisest”) and the stupid below (often translated “the stupidest”): the former will never become bad and the latter will never become good. According to this interpretation, 17.2 provides a general principle that people can become good or evil depending upon how they act, and 17.3 qualifies this principle with two exceptional cases of people whose nature cannot be altered regardless of their actions.

In order to make sense of such an interpretation, it is understandable (although somewhat surprising) for commentators to portray Confucius’s conception of human nature as neither good (an idea more fully developed by Mencius) nor evil (an idea more fully developed by Xunzi), nor as a combination of good and evil (an idea more fully developed by GONGSUN Ni 公孫尼), but rather as existing in three gradations (*xing sanpin shuo* 性三品說): some humans’ nature is good, some humans’ nature is evil, and some humans’ nature is a combination of good and evil (an idea more fully developed by DONG Zhongshu 董仲舒 [197–104 B.C.E.] and HAN Yu 韓愈 [768–825 C.E.]). For example, in his *Lunyu hou’an*, HUANG Shisan states,

According to the three-grades theory of human nature, because some humans’ nature is good, there are [good] sons, Sun 舜 and Yi 禹, from [bad] fathers, Shou 瞽 and Gun 鯀; because some humans’ nature is bad, there are [good] fathers, Yao 堯 and Shun, with [bad] sons, Zhu 朱 and Jun 均; because some humans’ nature is a mixture of good and bad, there are people in the middle (*zhongren* 中人). When Confucius talks about people in the middle, he is referring to those whose nature is a mixture of good and evil. They are people “whose nature is alike but who grow apart from each other through practice.” Those who are above the people in the middle are the wise above and those who are below the people in the middle are the stupid below.⁷⁹

Thus, he further claims that, together with *Analects* 17.2, Confucius conveys the belief that “there are people above whose nature cannot be changed into evil, people in the middle whose original good nature may be changed into evil, and stupid people below whose nature cannot be changed into good.”⁸⁰ WANG Chong 王充 also argues that

Confucius says that “humans are alike in nature and become different through practice.” Therefore the nature of people in the middle depends upon

⁷⁸ Ibid., 17.2.

⁷⁹ Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 1185.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

practice. They become good if they practice good things and become bad if they practice bad things. Those who are extremely good and those who are extremely bad have nothing to do with practice. Thus Confucius says that “only the wise above and the stupid below do not change.” Their nature is either good or bad, which cannot be changed by the transformation of sagehood or the teachings of the worthies.⁸¹

In *Lunyu yishu*, HUANG Kan further explains how these three grades of human nature originated. In his view, humans, when born, are endowed with *qi* 氣:

There are both clear and turbid qualities of *qi*. If one is endowed with the clearest quality of *qi*, then one will be a sage; if one is endowed with the most turbid quality of *qi* then one will be a benighted person. Because the *qi* of a benighted person is of the most turbid quality, then even if this *qi* were allowed to settle⁸² it would not become clear. Because the sage has the clearest quality of *qi*, even if it were stirred it would not become turbid. So even if the wise above is in a chaotic society, his integrity will not be disturbed; even if the stupid below is surrounded by Yaos and Shuns, his evil cannot be changed. Thus it is said that the wise above and the stupid below do not change. However, below the wise above and above the stupid below . . . there are those whose clear *qi* is in excess of their turbid *qi*, those whose turbid *qi* is in excess of their clear *qi*, and those who have equal measures of clear and turbid *qi*. In the case of such people, if their *qi* is allowed to settle, it will become clear, whereas if it is stirred, it will become turbid. These people change as the world around them changes. If they encounter good then they become clear and rise; if they encounter bad then they become sullied and sink.⁸³

Although this interpretation seems to make some sense, it is based on the highly problematic assumption that Confucius adopts the three-grades theory of human nature rather than either of the two definitely more influential theories, Mencius's theory of human nature as good and Xunzi's theory of human nature as evil. As is well known, unlike later Confucians, Confucius himself does not clearly state whether human nature is good or evil or a combination of good and evil. There are only two references to human nature in the *Analects*, and 17.2, which states that “humans are alike by their inborn nature,” is the only definite assertion about it. (The other reference to human nature is 5.13, where Confucius's student Zigong complains that one cannot hear Confucius's view on human nature or the Way of

⁸¹ Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 1186.

⁸² Such as solids suspended in a liquid.

⁸³ Cited in *ibid.*, 1187. In order to make “Confucius's” three-grades theory of human nature consistent with Mencius's theory of human nature as good, GU Tinglin 顧亭林 (1613–1682) argues that, just as the nature of water is cold and yet there are still warm springs, so, too, it is normal for heaven to give birth to people in the middle and it is atypical to have wise people above and stupid people below. Mencius focuses on normal people, while Confucius (in 17.3) focuses on the atypical (cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 1186).

heaven).⁸⁴ This does not mean, however, that Confucius did not have a theory of human nature. *Analects* 17.2 is key to understanding this theory. Here, Confucius does not say that “some humans” or “most humans” are alike by nature, but that “humans (in general) are alike.” This shows that the three-grades theory of human nature, at least, cannot be correct, as humans of these three different natures cannot be regarded as “alike.” It does not, however, indicate in what sense humans are alike. For this information, we must look to the general ideas of *the Analects*. I agree with XU Fuguan 徐復觀, who argues that Confucius holds the view that human nature is good, because “Confucius believes that *ren* 仁 is inherent in every human life. It is for this reason that he can say, ‘Is *ren* far away? It is here as soon as I desire it’ [7.30] and ‘to practice *ren* depends upon oneself [12.1]. . . . Since Confucius believes that *ren* is inherent in every human life, although he does not explicitly say that *ren* is human nature . . . he actually believes that human nature is good.”⁸⁵ Confucius is even reported to have said that “*ren* 仁 is *ren* 人.”⁸⁶ This statement implies that *ren* is a defining feature of human beings. I therefore agree that Mencius’s theory that human nature is good represents Confucius’s own view better than any other theories of human nature.⁸⁷

■ CHENG Yi’s interpretation of *Analects* 17.3

CHENG Yi likewise understands the terms “wise” and “stupid” in this *Analects* passage in their moral rather than intellectual senses. In other words, the “wise” are morally good people, whereas the “stupid” are morally bad people. Whether or not a person is morally good is not related to his or her intellectual ability. On the one hand, the morally wise person is not necessarily highly intelligent: “Even those who are extremely unintelligent can also gradually make moral progress.”⁸⁸ On the other hand, the morally stupid person is not necessarily a person of lesser intelligence.

⁸⁴ On *Analects* 5.13, TANG Junyi 唐君毅 (1909–1978) argues that Confucius’s views on the Way of heaven and human nature were rarely heard because before Confucius, the Way of heaven and human nature were considered to be in opposition, whereas Confucius did not regard them to be so. Thus, Zigong means only that Confucius rarely contrasted these two concepts rather than that he hardly ever talked about them. See TANG Junyi, *Zhongguo zhexue yuan lun* 中國哲學原論：原性篇 (On the Sources of Chinese Philosophy: Human Nature; Taipei: xuesheng shuju, 1991) 32.

⁸⁵ XU Fuguan, *Zhongguo renxing lun shi*, 97–98.

⁸⁶ *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Doctrine of the Mean), in *Liji yizhu* 禮記譯注 (Annotated Translation of the Book of Rites; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004) 700.

⁸⁷ TANG Junyi also argues that Confucius holds the view that human nature is good: “Confucius says that humans are born with uprightness [*Analects* 6.19], that humaneness (*ren*) is here whenever I desire it [*Analects* 7.30], that a humane person can feel at home in humanness [*Analects* 4.2]. . . . So it is appropriate to think that he regarded the human heart/mind as the place where good human nature resides. His claim that humans are relatively similar by nature is no different from Mencius’s claims that ‘things of the same kind are relatively similar’ and that ‘sages and I are of the same kind.’ They all mean that human nature is good” (TANG Junyi, *Zhongguo zhexue yuan lun*, 31).

⁸⁸ *Er Cheng ji* (Zhouyi Chengshi zhuan, fascicle 4) 956.

Of morally stupid people, CHENG Yi argues, “not all are intellectually deficient; many of them, such as SHANG Xin 商辛 [the last King of the Shang Dynasty, named Zhou 紂], have superior intellectual abilities that ordinary people do not have.”⁸⁹ While acknowledging that there are morally good people and morally bad people, CHENG Yi claims that the difference between them has nothing to do with their inner nature. He therefore argues against the three-grades theory of human nature. In his view, “the nature of all humans is the same.”⁹⁰ Moreover, Cheng advocates the Mencian view that “the nature of all humans is good.”⁹¹ According to him, “Mencius overshadows all other Confucians because he sheds light on human nature. No human’s nature is not good. . . . Human nature is the same as principle (*li* 理) and principle is the same from Yao and Shun to common people.”⁹² In his view, the distinction between the wise above and the stupid below in *Analects* 17.3 does not pertain to human nature, in which they are alike, as Confucius affirms in 17.2. There is no difference between the wise above and the stupid below at birth in this respect: “From childhood, the sagely quality is already complete in everybody.”⁹³ Since the nature of the stupid below, like that of the wise above, is originally good, “it is not their nature to be stupid below. They are stupid because they have not made full use of their *cai* 才 (natural endowment).”⁹⁴

Here CHENG Yi is referring to *Mencius* 6A6, where Mencius states that there are people who are not as good as others because they fail to make best use of their natural endowments. In Cheng’s view, Mencius’s “four beginnings [humaneness, rightness, propriety, and wisdom] are the natural endowment (*cai*) for one to be good. There are people who are not good, because they do not make full use of the natural endowments of the four beginnings.”⁹⁵ So the distinction between the wise above and the stupid below is a result of their efforts, or lack thereof, to exercise their *cai*. The wise above are wise because they exercise their *cai*; the stupid below are stupid because they do not exercise their *cai*. A new understanding of the relationship between *Analects* 17.2 and 17.3 thus emerges. According to the conventional understanding, the distinction between the wise above and the stupid below in *Analects* 17.3 qualifies *Analects* 17.2, where the general principle that humans are alike by nature is stipulated. Thus the nature of the wise and the nature of the stupid are not only unlike each other but also unlike that of common people, whose nature is discussed in 17.2. According to this new understanding, however, 17.3 does not qualify but rather further explains how humans, who are alike by nature, grow apart through practice, with the result that there is a distinction between the wise above

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 319.

⁹¹ Ibid. (*Zhouyi Chengshi zhuan*, fascicle 4) 956.

⁹² Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 18) 204.

⁹³ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 18) 81.

⁹⁴ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 323.

⁹⁵ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 19) 253.

and the stupid below. In other words, “the wise above” and “the stupid below” in 17.3 are not exceptions to, but rather, among the “humans” in 17.2.

Here CHENG Yi interprets Confucius’s “the stupid below” as people who lack self-confidence (*zibao* 自暴) and give up on themselves (*ziqu* 自棄). In his commentary on the *Book of Change*, when asked why there are people who cannot be transformed, CHENG Yi replies:

The nature of all humans is good, although there are stupid below in terms of *cai* 才. There are two types of people who belong to the stupid below: those who lack self-confidence and those who give up on themselves. If one cultivates oneself to become good, there is no one who cannot be changed. Even those who are extremely unintelligent can gradually make moral progress. Only those who lack self-confidence and do not trust themselves and those who abandon themselves and do not want to make any effort cannot be transformed to enter the Way even if they are surrounded by sages. These are those to whom Confucius refers as the stupid below.⁹⁶

So in Cheng’s view, *zibao* and *ziqu* are the two greatest enemies of moral cultivation. As long as people think that they cannot become wise and do not try to become wise, they can never become wise. Thus, in Cheng’s view, “no failure in action is greater than evil, but it can be remedied; no failure in administration is worse than disorder, but it can be rectified. Only those who lack self-confidence and give up on themselves cannot become superior persons.”⁹⁷ Here the people to whom CHENG Yi refers as being *zibao* and *ziqu* are the very people to whom Confucius refers as being unwilling to learn even after being vexed by difficulties (*kun er bu xue*). Commentators have failed to note, however, that although according to some conventional interpretations the stupid below also include those who do not learn even after being vexed with difficulties, Confucius here does not say that these people are too stupid to learn but that they do not learn. So he does not say that these people cannot be changed if they start to learn.

In contrast, the wise above, in CHENG Yi’s view, are those who have gained knowledge, knowledge of/as virtue in contrast to knowledge by hearing and seeing, whether innate (*sheng er zhi zhi* 生而知之) or learned; and, in the latter case, whether they learned it before (*xue er zhi zhi* 學而知之) or after (*kun er zhi zhi* 困而知之) they were vexed by difficulties. It is important to note that, for CHENG Yi, the wise above are not merely those who are born with knowledge. On the one hand, this is because, in his view, what is important is to acquire the needed knowledge; it does not matter how it is acquired. Thus, he repeatedly states: “Whether you get the knowledge by learning or through birth, its function is the same.”⁹⁸ On the other hand, although CHENG Yi does not deny the existence of people with inborn

⁹⁶ Ibid. (*Zhouyi Chengshi zhuan*, fascicle 4) 956.

⁹⁷ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 4), 69. This passage is not specifically attributed to CHENG Yi, but it is consistent with other passages on *zibao* and *ziqu* that are attributed to CHENG Yi.

⁹⁸ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 18) 213; see also (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 325.

moral knowledge, his emphasis is on the importance of learning. Thus, while acknowledging that Confucius was born with knowledge, he asks, even so, “what harm does learning cause to him?”⁹⁹ At times, Cheng emphasizes knowledge by learning so much that he virtually ignores innate knowledge. For example, he states that “those who are born with knowledge of course do not need to learn, but sages must learn.”¹⁰⁰ If sages still need to learn, then who are those born with knowledge who do not need to learn? It appears that Cheng’s objective here is to define innate knowledge rather than to affirm its existence, just as we may define the term “unicorn” without affirming that unicorns exist.¹⁰¹ This attitude of CHENG Yi’s toward people born with knowledge is quite similar to that of Confucius. CHENG Yi and other later Confucians regarded Confucius as a sage born with knowledge, but Confucius himself denied it. As noted by CAI Shangsi: “Confucius himself does not really believe that there are indeed ‘people who are born with knowledge,’ for he not only laments that he has never seen a ‘sage,’ and not only denies that he himself is a sage by birth, but also clearly denies that he himself is ‘one born with knowledge.’”¹⁰²

With such an understanding of the wise above and the stupid below, we are ready to understand CHENG Yi’s interpretation of the *Analects* passage, “Only the wise above and the stupid below do not change.” At first glance, CHENG Yi seems to simply deny what Confucius says. For example, when asked whether the stupid can be changed, he replies: “Yes. Confucius says that the wise above and the stupid below do not change, but there are reasons for them to change. . . . It is wrong to say that the stupid below cannot change. They share the same human nature with others, and so how can they not be changed?”¹⁰³ In his comment on *Analects* 6.21, where Confucius distinguishes three kinds of people—above-average people, average people, and below-average people—CHENG Yi claims that this distinction relates to their *cai* rather than their nature. Then, when asked whether those who are below average have to remain so throughout their lives, CHENG Yi replies: “There is also a way for them to make moral progress.”¹⁰⁴ For this reason, in his *Sishu bianyi* 四書辯疑 (On Doubts about the Four Books) the Yuan 元 scholar CHEN Tianxiang 陳天祥 (1230–1316) argues against CHENG Yi: “Confucius says that the stupidest cannot be changed, while Cheng thinks that they can be changed. If CHENG Yi is correct, then Confucius must be wrong.”¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 15) 152.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 19) 253.

¹⁰¹ His brother CHENG Hao held the same view: “Although there must be people who are born with knowledge, I have not seen any” (Ibid. [*Yishu*, fascicle 4] 141).

¹⁰² CAI Shangsi, *Kongzi sixiang tixi*, 99.

¹⁰³ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 18) 204.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 9) 107.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in CHENG Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, 1188. PANG Wanli also claims that “the two Chengs implicitly disagree with Confucius’s claim that ‘only the wise above and the stupid below do not change’” (*Er Cheng de zhexue tixi*, 147).

CHENG Yi, of course, does not think that he is arguing against Confucius. In his view, he is rather providing a correct interpretation of this *Analects* passage in light of the general principle that Confucius tries to convey. He argues that this passage “does not mean that people cannot be changed. It means that there is a principle that cannot be changed. Only two kinds of people cannot be changed: those who lack self-confidence and those who abandon themselves. They are unwilling to learn. If they are willing to learn, have confidence in themselves, and do not give up on themselves, how can they not change themselves?”¹⁰⁶ According to CHENG Yi’s interpretation, what Confucius means by “unchangeable” is this principle: If people give up on themselves and lack self-confidence, they cannot become wise. Conversely, if people continue to learn, they will necessarily become wise. So what Confucius means is that this principle governing the moral transformation of human beings will never change and not that the stupid cannot become wise.¹⁰⁷

The key point here is that, for CHENG Yi, people do not have the necessary knowledge not because they are stupid by nature but because they do not want to learn. If they start to learn, they will become wise. This is because, in Cheng’s view, first, the object of our knowledge, the Way or principle, is inherent in every one of us, although “you will never attain it if you do not exert effort”;¹⁰⁸ second, the ability to attain it, which is different from the ability to perform scientific research or philosophical meditation or poetry writing, is also inherent in our *xin* 心, the distinguishing mark of being human. Thus, he states:

Everyone has this Way. Only the superior person can apprehend and practice it. People do not apprehend it in their own heart/mind only because they give up on themselves. Thus, Mencius says: “When the four beginnings [of humanity, rightness, propriety, and wisdom] are fully developed, one can take under one’s protection the whole realm within the four seas, but if one fails to develop the four beginnings, one will not be able even to serve one’s parents.” Whether to develop them is entirely dependent upon oneself.¹⁰⁹

Superior persons and sages are so because they diligently develop that with which they are born, while inferior persons are so because they abandon their efforts to develop their innate moral tendencies. This is why, in the above passage, CHENG

¹⁰⁶ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 19) 252.

¹⁰⁷ CHENG Hao also states that “while time is something that sages cannot counteract, sages can certainly show us the way to change from ignorance to wisdom and from disorder to order” (ibid. [*Yishu*, fascicle 11] 122). PAN Fu’en 潘富恩 and XU Yuqing 徐余慶 comment that “CHENG Yi’s ‘principle of changeability’ about the wise above and the stupid below refers to a one-way change: the change of the stupid below to the wise above. In no time and under no condition will the wise above be changed to the stupid below” (Pan and Xu, *Cheng Hao Cheng Yi lixue sixiang yanjiu* 程頤程頤理學思想研究 [A Study of CHENG Hao and CHENG Yi’s Neo-Confucianism; Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1988] 356). This interpretation makes sense. If people are wise, they know that they cannot stop learning, and they will therefore not become stupid. Anyone who does stop learning can never have truly been one of the wise above.

¹⁰⁸ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 316.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 321.

Yi concludes that development of the four beginnings is entirely up to oneself. This is consistent with Mencius, who says in the same paragraph, “for people possessing these four beginnings to deny their own potentialities is for them to cripple themselves.”¹¹⁰

Thus, CHENG Yi emphasizes the importance of learning. He argues that “for superior persons, nothing is more important than to learn, nothing is more harmful than to stop, nothing is more sickening than to be self-content, and nothing is more sinful than to give up on oneself. To learn without stopping is how Tang and Wu become sages.”¹¹¹ For him, “anyone can become a sage. The learning of a superior person must not stop until one becomes a sage. Those who stop before becoming sages all do so because they given up on themselves.”¹¹² For this reason, CHENG Yi encourages people to set high goals for themselves. He states, “people in the world often question how they could become sages. This is because they do not have self-confidence (*zixin* 自信).”¹¹³ In his view, with regard to such matters, it is not necessarily good to be modest. One should not be satisfied to be a second-class person while politely letting others become first-class people. Rather, “in learning, one ought to aim at the Way, and in being a person, one ought to aim at being a sage. To say that one is unable to do so is to cripple oneself, and to say that one’s head [heart/mind] is unable to do so is to cripple one’s head. . . . It is fine to have such humiliation as long as one still tries; it is not permissible to have such humiliation as an excuse for not trying.”¹¹⁴

■ The Role of Sages: Education

We have examined CHENG Yi’s interpretations of two controversial passages, *Analects* 8.9 and 17.3, and found them superior to some of the more conventional interpretations. For CHENG Yi, people cannot be made to know the Way because knowledge of the Way is knowledge of/as virtue (*dexing zhi zhi*), which must be attained on one’s own (*zide*). Although people cannot be made to know the Way, they can still know the Way on their own as long as they have confidence in themselves and do not abandon their efforts. The stupid below who do not become wise are simply those who lack self-confidence and give up on themselves. If they are resolved to learn, they can also become wise. Here it is important to address a question likely to arise from our discussion thus far: Does this mean that people have to be entirely self-reliant in seeking the Way? This is indeed what WANG Yanlin 王彦霖, one of CHENG Yi’s students, believed to be the case: “People can become good only when they are willing to become good by themselves. So they cannot be made to be good.” If so, what is the role of sages in moral cultivation?

¹¹⁰ *Mencius* 2A6.

¹¹¹ *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 325.

¹¹² *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 318.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 319.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 18) 189.

To this, Cheng replies: "What you say is indeed true. People themselves have to try to become good. This does not, however, mean that they should be left alone. This is the reason for education. 'Cultivating the Way is called education.' How can there be no education (*jiao*)?!"¹¹⁵

So, while emphasizing attaining the Way on one's own, CHENG Yi also stressed the importance of education:

The way to maintain people's lives (*shengmin zhi dao* 生民之道) should be based on education. If everyone under heaven receives education, inferior people cultivate their person, and superior people cultivate their Way, then the worthy and the able will be assembled in government and good practices will be carried out in society. Propriety and rightness will prevail and customs will become pure and beautiful. Although there will be punitive laws, no one will violate them. The prosperity of the three dynasties resulted from teaching in such a way.¹¹⁶

In Mencius's terms, education means that those who already possess knowledge and awareness (*xianzhi xianjue* 先知先覺) should awaken those who have yet to acquire them (*houzhi houjue* 後知後覺): "Take an analogy. Suppose everyone is asleep. Others have not awakened, but I awake first. So I shake those who have not awakened so that they can awaken."¹¹⁷ In the context of education, however, CHENG Yi argues that the former (educators) did not take something from themselves and give it to the latter, for the latter also have what the former have; they simply have not been aware of it.¹¹⁸ CHENG Yi thus contrasts the Confucian and Daoist attitudes toward education: "The learning of the superior person is: 'Those who know first are obligated to awaken those who do not know yet; and those who awaken first are obligated to awaken those who have yet to awaken.' Laozi, however, advises: 'Do not seek to enlighten people but keep them ignorant.' This is to cripple one's own nature."¹¹⁹

Since CHENG Yi believes that human nature is originally all good, education's foremost goal is to cultivate this original goodness to ensure that it will grow and not be lost. For this reason, he develops the idea of "cultivating correctness in childhood" (*yang zheng yu meng* 養正于蒙): "The unaroused state is called childhood (*meng* 蒙).

¹¹⁵ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 1) 2. This passage is not specifically attributed to CHENG Yi, but it is consistent with views that he expresses in other passages, e.g., "WANG Yanlin says: 'People can become good only because they have the sincere heart/mind to be so. It is only by being so that they can attain it on their own. If they do not have the will, the good cannot be imposed upon them.' The master said: 'No. If we leave people alone and do not care about their unwillingness to become good, then there are many people below the middle level who will give up on themselves and lack confidence. This is why the sages emphasize education'" (Ibid. [*Cuiyan*, fascicle 1] 1188).

¹¹⁶ Ibid. (*Wenji*, fascicle 9) 593.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a) 32. This passage is not specifically attributed to CHENG Yi. Some scholars attribute it to CHENG Hao.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 1) 5. This passage is likewise not specifically attributed to CHENG Yi. Some scholars attribute it to CHENG Hao.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 25) 322.

To cultivate correctness (*zheng* 正) in the pure and unaroused state of childhood is the art of sages. It becomes more difficult to prohibit incorrectness in the aroused state. To cultivate correctness in childhood is the utmost goodness of learning.”¹²⁰ In other words, if original goodness is lost, then it is difficult to get it back. It is therefore best to take care of original goodness, so that when it is aroused, it will remain intact. Thus CHENG Yi argues that “the way to educate people is similar to training a young bull. To control it before it is able to harm people with its horns is the greatest good. . . . If people are not to be educated, then there is a need for instruments of punishment to control them. If, however, their hearts are guided by the Way, then no such instruments are needed, as they will be transformed by themselves.”¹²¹ Even when there is already incorrectness in the aroused state, still “it is easy to stop human evil at its beginning. It is difficult to control it when it is fully developed.”¹²²

While it is best to educate people when they are young, this does not mean that no moral education is needed for adults, especially those who have lost their original goodness. CHENG Yi argues that the best way to get such people back on the right track is not through the application of laws and punishments but through moral education. In his commentary on the *Book of Change*, he states that sages

know that evil things in the world cannot be constrained by force. So, by observing its roots and grasping its fundamentals, the sages block the origin of evil. Without recourse to strict legal punishments, by itself evil ceases to exist. For example, there is robbery because people’s selfish desires arise when they see something beneficial. When people do not receive education and are forced into poverty, even if there is capital punishment every day, how can it win over the selfish heart of billions of people? Sages, however, know the way to stop them. They do not advocate terrible punishments but rather establish governance and education, letting people have land to cultivate and making them know the way of shame. This way, even if you reward thieves, nobody will steal.¹²³

In Cheng’s view, there are two effective types of moral education. One is education by setting an example (*shen jiao* 身教), and the other is education by teaching about the Way (*yanjiao* 言教). With regard to the former, commenting on Mencius’s view that “when the ruler is humane (*ren*), everyone will be humane, and when the ruler is dutiful, everyone will be dutiful,”¹²⁴ CHENG Yi states that “the order or disorder of the world depends upon the humaneness or inhumaneness of

¹²⁰ Ibid. (*Zhouyi Chengshi zhuan*, fascicle 1) 720.

¹²¹ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a) 14. Although this passage is not specifically attributed to CHENG Yi, a very similar passage is found in his commentary on the *Book of Change*; see ibid. (*Zhouyi Chengshi zhuan*, fascicle 2) 831.

¹²² Ibid. (*Zhouyi Chengshi zhuan*, fascicle 2) 830–31.

¹²³ Ibid. (*Zhouyi Chengshi zhuan*, fascicle 2) 831.

¹²⁴ *Mencius* 4B5.

the ruler.”¹²⁵ For this reason, he develops the idea of “rectification of the incorrect heart/mind of the ruler (*ge jun xin zhi fei* 格君心之非)” as the root of sovereignty: “There are two ways to rule: through the root or through the branch. From the root, the only thing to do is to rectify the incorrect heart/mind of the ruler in order to rectify higher officials, and to rectify higher officials in order to rectify lower officials.”¹²⁶ Of course, when the lower officials are rectified, common people will be rectified by themselves. Therefore, CHENG Yi claims that “if you want to govern others, you need to govern yourself first.”¹²⁷ This view of CHENG Yi’s on example-setting as a mode of education is, of course, a typically Confucian view. Confucius himself says, “if the ruler sets an example by being correct, who would dare to remain incorrect?”¹²⁸ Likewise, “when the ruler loves propriety, no common people dare not love it; when the ruler loves rightness, no common people dare not love it; and when the ruler loves faithfulness, no common people dare not love it.”¹²⁹ This is what Confucius calls “governing with virtue,” which can be compared to the pole star that does not move while all other stars revolve around it.¹³⁰ For Confucius, the reason is that “the virtue of superior persons is like wind, while the virtue of inferior persons is like grass. When the wind blows over the grass, the grass is sure to bend.”¹³¹

CHENG Yi has the Confucian classics in mind when he discusses education by spreading the sages’ moral teachings (*yan jiao* 言教). In his view, “the sages had no choice but to write the Six Classics; just as there would be no way to maintain people’s daily lives if there are no farm tools and pottery.”¹³² In other words, while sages themselves have no use for the classics, they know that, just as tools and pottery are necessary for people’s daily life, so too are the classics necessary for people’s moral cultivation, because “the sages wrote the classics solely to illuminate the Way.”¹³³ Of course, as we have seen, the knowledge that common people can receive from sages through the classics is merely knowledge from hearing and seeing and not knowledge of/as virtue, and it is the latter that really matters in moral education. Does this mean that the sages’ teachings are useless? Although it is true that what matters here is knowledge of/as virtue, CHENG Yi argues that knowledge by hearing and seeing is also important as it can be developed into knowledge of/as virtue if, when reading classics, one tries to experience that which sages experience in one’s own heart/mind so that it becomes one’s own. For example, Cheng offers

¹²⁵ *Er Cheng ji* (*Waishu*, fascicle 6) 390.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 15) 165.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* (*Chengshi jingshuo*, fascicle 8) 1155.

¹²⁸ *Analects* 12.17.

¹²⁹ *Analects* 13.4.

¹³⁰ *Analects* 2.1.

¹³¹ *Analects* 12.19.

¹³² *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 18) 221.

¹³³ *Ibid.* (*Yishu*, fascicle 2a) 13. Although this passage is not specifically attributed to CHENG Yi, we can attribute it to him on the basis of a similar passage in *Er Cheng ji* (*Yishu*, fascicle 15) 164.

the following instructions: “Learners should go deep into the *Analects*, regarding the questions of Confucius’s students as their own questions and applying the sage’s answers to these questions as if addressed to their own situation. This way, they will necessarily attain it (knowledge of the Way).”¹³⁴ For this reason, Cheng maintains that when those who already know and are aware of the Way (*xianzhi xianjue*) teach those who are yet to know and become aware of the Way (*houzhi zhoujue*), the former must ensure that the latter achieve understanding on their own. In his view, this is indeed how Confucius taught his students. Thus, commenting on *Analects* 7.8, CHENG Yi argues that when Confucius says, “do not enlighten those who are not eager to learn and do not bring new horizons to those who are not anxious to give an explanation,” he is “asking one not to teach a student until the student is sincere”; and when Confucius said, “Do not repeat if one cannot come back with three other corners after one corner is presented,” he means that, “after teaching students, one should wait until they achieve understanding on their own.”¹³⁵ CHENG Yi assures us that by studying the classics this way, we will be able to attain knowledge of the Way: “If we cannot get it [the Way] through learning, then why did the ancient sages teach people so diligently? Did they try to mislead later people?”¹³⁶

So, in CHENG Yi’s view, although one has to attain knowledge of the Way on one’s own, moral education, whether in the form of setting an example or in the form of moral teachings, is still extremely important. It might, however, be asked, “Since both modes of education are effective only for those who are willing to learn, then what about those who think that they cannot learn or are unwilling to learn at all?” Cheng argues that there are such people in all ages, including the time of Yao and Shun. Sages, however, do not abandon even people such as these. For such people, they establish more or less coercive measures to prevent them from doing evil and force them to do good. Thus, CHENG Yi states,

To enlighten the inferior people (*xia ming* 下民), prohibitive laws should be made public so that those people will not dare to violate them; then those people should be taught to follow them. Since ancient times, sagely kings have governed by establishing punitive laws to have uniformity among the people, illuminating them with their teachings to improve people’s mores. First, punitive laws are established, and then there will be moral cultivation. Although sages advocate virtue instead of punitive laws, they are not one-sided. So at the beginning of government they establish laws; and at the beginning of enlightening [people], they make sure that people do not dare to violate these laws. This is to break their chain of ignorance. . . . Until such chains of ignorance are first broken, good teachings cannot enter. When such punitive laws are carried out, it is true that these people do not understand it from their heart/mind, but at least they are threatened not to

¹³⁴ Ibid. (*Yishu*, fascicle 22a) 279.

¹³⁵ Ibid. (*Chengshi jingshuo*, fascicle 6) 1144.

¹³⁶ Ibid. (*Wenji*, fascicle 8) 579–80.

disobey; later they can gradually understand the teaching of goodness and change their distorted mind, and the prevailing habits and customs can then be transformed. If only the punitive laws are used, inferior people may be threatened [not to do evil things] but will not be enlightened, and so they will not only cause trouble but will not have a sense of shame either.¹³⁷

In CHENG Yi's view, even for such people coercive measures are only cautionary and provisional. It is CHENG Yi's conviction that the threat of punishment will suffice to prevent people from doing evil things, so that punishment itself will remain unnecessary.¹³⁸ Moreover, coercive measures are not to be used alone. Because these measures cannot make people understand the reasons for obeying rules and laws, they must immediately be followed by moral teachings.¹³⁹

■ Conclusion

In the above, we have examined CHENG Yi's philosophical interpretations of two controversial *Analects* passages in contrast to conventional interpretations provided by Confucian scholars both before and after him. In Cheng's view, by saying that common people *bu ke* know the Way in *Analects* 8.9, Confucius does not mean that common people *are not permitted to* know the Way, but that they *cannot* be made (by sages) to know the Way; they cannot be made to know the Way, not because they are too stupid to be made to know the Way, but because sages lack the ability to make common people to know the Way; and sages lack the ability to make common people to know the Way, not because sages are deficient, but because the type of knowledge needed here, knowledge of/as virtue, which naturally inclines its possessors to act accordingly, by its very nature must be attained by people themselves through their own inner experiences. In Cheng's view, the moral ability to attain such knowledge, unlike the intellectual ability to make scientific discoveries or technological inventions, is innate in every human being. For this reason, he does not agree with the common interpretation of another controversial passage, *Analects* 17.3, which states that "only the wise above and the stupid below do not change." According to the common interpretation, Confucius here is saying that those born to be wise (or moral) will not become stupid (or immoral) and those born to be stupid will not become wise; only those born to be mixed can be made to be either moral or immoral. In Cheng's view, however, everyone is born to be

¹³⁷ Ibid. (*Zhouyi Chengshi zhuan*, fascicle 8), 720; see also ibid. (*Wenji*, fascicle 5) 591.

¹³⁸ See ibid. (*Wenji*, fascicle 5) 593.

¹³⁹ Thus, it is important to view punitive laws as supplementary rather than alternative to the moral education of even those people who have abandoned themselves. Lionard Shihlien Hsü argues that "since this lowest class of the people cannot be changed by learning or the teaching of virtue, such forceful methods as law and punishment must be used to rectify them, or, using the Confucian terminology, to 'bring them to the level of good people' [*Analects* 2.3]. In other words, law and the system of justice are to supplement political education, *li*, and moral discipline, in completing the function of rectification" (Hsü, *The Political Philosophy of Confucianism* [London: Curzon Press, 1975] 163).

good and as long as one makes a diligent effort, one can become a sage. There are immoral people only because they do not make such an effort and give up on themselves.¹⁴⁰ Thus, in Cheng's view, what Confucius regards as unchangeable in *Analects* 17.3 is the principle that one can become wise (meaning moral) as long as one makes a diligent effort toward that goal. In his unique interpretations of these two *Analects* passages, Cheng emphasizes the importance of the self-cultivation of moral agents. However, he does not ignore the important roles that sages can play in such moral cultivation. To those who are willing to make the necessary effort, sages can offer moral guidance by writing classics and through their own exemplary actions; to those who are unwilling to make the necessary effort, sages can establish rules of propriety and even penal laws to induce moral behavior and to prevent immoral behavior. As we have noted, in comparison to Han learning, the Confucian hermeneutics before and after Song learning, the neo-Confucian hermeneutics that Cheng helps to establish is more philosophical than philological, as illustrated by his interpretation of these two passages. The objective of such a hermeneutic strategy is to use the fundamental Confucian principle, derived from various Confucian classics as well as from other sources, to guide our interpretation of individual passages. While such an interpretation may be vulnerable to evidential and textual criticisms, it has the advantage of presenting a coherent Confucian teaching that is philosophically interesting.

¹⁴⁰ What, precisely, is the source of immorality in people born to be good? This is a complicated issue that Cheng makes a great effort to deal with. I am currently working on a separate paper discussing this issue.

Food for Thought: Systems of Categorization in Leviticus 11*

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In two interconnected theoretical works published in 1962, Lévi-Strauss¹ argued that the tendency among primitive societies to formulate animal classification systems and to express these systems ritually cannot be explained as a side-effect of social classification, as Durkheim and Mauss had argued,² nor can it be explained on the narrow materialistic grounds posited by Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski.³ The negative evidence adduced by Lévi-Strauss is empirical: animal classification systems are neither limited to societies in which there exists a fixed correlation between social groups and animal species, nor do they pertain to species that are of significant material or symbolic value to the classifying culture. According to Lévi-Strauss, the ritual expression of the mental act of classification functions like a language, containing “stressed” and “unstressed” elements⁴ and aiming to convey theoretical messages.⁵

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¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Totémisme aujourd’hui* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962); translated into English by Rodney Needham as *Totemism* (Boston: Beacon, 1963); and idem, *La Pensée sauvage* (Paris: Plon, 1962), translated into English anonymously as *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966).

²Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification* (trans. Rodney Needham; London: Cohen and West, 1963), originally published as “De quelques formes primitives de classification: contribution à l’étude des représentations collectives,” *Année Sociologique* 6 (1903) 1–72.

³ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, “The Sociological Theory of Totemism,” in *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (London: Cohen and West, 1952) 117–32; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon, 1948) 27–28; Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, 56–71; *The Savage Mind*, 3.

⁴ Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 103.

⁵ Four years after the publication of these essays, and without explicitly referring to them, Mary Douglas (*Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Pollution and Taboo* [London: Routledge and

Taking his cue from Bergson,⁶ Lévi-Strauss shows that the reason primitive cultures tend to choose animal species as the basic units of their ritual classification systems lies primarily in the structure of these systems: animal taxonomy is a useful model for categorization, since in the division of animals into species nature offers primitive man a rare example of discreteness. Whereas most natural phenomena are encountered as a continuous spectrum (e.g., the light spectrum), animal taxa are by nature distinct.⁷ Furthermore, there exists a homologous relationship between the distribution of individuals among social groups in a human society on the one hand, and the distribution of individual animals among species in the animal kingdom on the other hand. Thus, claims Lévi-Strauss, animal species have become the object of ritual attitudes not due to their material value, that is to say, not because they are “good to eat,” but rather because they are “good to think,” serving as a useful model for differentiating thought.⁸

However, in Lévi-Strauss’s view, animal taxonomy was chosen as a model for categorization not merely because of its formal structure but also due to the primordial affinity between human and animal. Thus, the basic elements in the “language” of classification—animal species—are themselves a clue to what the contents of a message conveyed through a classification system might be: these messages pertain to what Lévi-Strauss considers the central problem of human culture—the relation between human and animal, between culture and nature.

This approach, which views animal classification systems as essentially theoretical in character, is faced with several difficulties. Firstly, it tends to ignore concrete social and economic needs, projecting whole systems of ritual onto an

Kegan Paul, 1966]) attempted to demonstrate how such a system of categorization might serve as a medium for conveying an ideological or religious message. Since 1966, Douglas has reformulated and revised several of the insights of *Purity and Danger*, without abandoning the general theory regarding the relation between impurity and anomaly.

⁶ Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, 135–36. The core of this argument was already intimated by Durkheim and Mauss (*Primitive Classification*, 7–8). For a lucid discussion of the problem see Edmund Leach, “Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse,” in *New Directions in the Study of Language* (ed. E. H. Lenneberg; Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964) 34–36.

⁷ According to Daniel Sperber (“Pourquoi les animaux parfaits, les hybrides et les monstres sont-ils bons à penser symboliquement?,” *L’Homme* 15 [1975] 5–34), taxonomy differs from other systems of classification in that the categorization of each element is exclusive and absolute: a single element cannot belong to two distinct categories simultaneously (unless one is a subset of the other), nor can it belong to a particular category to a greater or lesser extent. Empirical findings show that most known societies—modern as well as primitive—prefer taxonomy to cross-classification for animal categorization.

⁸ The original context of this well-known aphorism is Lévi-Strauss’s criticism (*Totémisme*, 128) of the materialistic interpretation offered by Radcliffe-Brown: “On comprend enfin que les espèces naturelles ne sont pas choisies parce que ‘bonnes à manger’ mais parce que ‘bonnes à penser.’” The wording used above, “a useful model for differentiating thought” demands clarification in light of the general context of Lévi-Strauss’s writings. Animal classification systems are not a model external to logic, which logic imitates; rather, thinking with the aid of animal species and ritual values, like the performance of mathematical operations using algebraic variables and operators, is an expression of the mental operation itself.

intellectual plane.⁹ Secondly, the need to express these theoretical systems of classification ritually remains unexplained.¹⁰

The most severe difficulty in applying Lévi-Strauss's general theory to particular systems of classification is that although he asserts that classification systems function like a language, conveying theoretical messages, his reticence regarding the possible semantics of such a "language" renders the possible contents of these messages rather obscure. Centering instead on the formal structure of classification systems, Lévi-Strauss only vaguely hints that these messages pertain to the relation between culture and nature.

One possible solution to this difficulty, hinted at in the last chapter of *Totemism*, is that the message lies in the very act of classification.¹¹ Thus, the mental act of categorization is to be considered the cultural act *par excellence*, distinguishing humans from animals and expressing the shift of human communities from nature to culture.

This solution accounts neither for the wide diversity of classification systems nor for the complexity of their inner structures. However, one may accept it as a partial solution, and still leave open the possibility that the details of the classification system, not only its very existence, convey a message pertaining to the relation between nature and culture. In order to determine whether this second possibility is in fact realized in a particular classification system, one must first analyze the basic elements constituting that system and the relations between them, and inquire: do the details of this system encode a message regarding the nature of the relationship between nature and culture that is different from what is implied in other, alternative systems of categorization? If the analysis offered here is correct, one may conclude that at least in the case of one ancient Israelite system of animal categorization, the system preserved in the text of Leviticus 11, the answer to this question is affirmative.

In order to accomplish this, it will first be necessary to examine two general categorization systems central to Biblical law, the system distinguishing between pure and impure and the system distinguishing between prohibited and permitted;¹²

⁹ Marvin Harris, *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974); idem, *Cultural Materialism* (New York: Random House, 1979); idem, *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

¹⁰ S. J. Tambiah, "Animals are Good to Think and Good to Prohibit," *Ethnology* 8 (1969) 453. Another problem is the lack of clarity regarding the question, what exactly is meant by *les espèces naturelles*, regarding the question of the so-called totemism. At times, it would seem that the term is designed to refer narrowly to fauna (e.g., Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, 20), but in many cases it obviously includes flora as well, in accordance with the empirical data (17, and the distinction regarding the Tikopia, 29).

¹¹ *Totemism*, 100–1. A similar intuition seems to underlie *Genesis Rabbah* 17, 4 (on Gen 2:19), which views the naming of the animals as an act which established human subjugation of the animal world.

¹² Biblical law expressly distinguishes between the categories "pure" and "impure," and the stems טָהוֹר and טָמֵא are found, with diverse semantic values, throughout Biblical literature. By

only then will it be possible to turn to the Biblical texts concerned with ritual taxonomy, particularly Leviticus 11 and its parallel Deuteronomy 14.

■ Impurity and Prohibition

The complex interrelations between impurity and prohibition are rooted, as Ricœur has argued, in a religious sphere that precedes—logically and chronologically—the texts preserved in Leviticus 11.¹³ However, the Bible is steeped in echoes of these earlier stages, and they resound clearly in the theology of priestly literature.¹⁴

One attempt to record these echoes—or, more precisely, to delineate their boundaries—is Wright’s distinction between “tolerated” and “prohibited” impurities.¹⁵ Prohibited impurities stem from deliberate as well as inadvertent transgressions. Impurity stemming from inadvertent transgressions accumulates—as Milgrom has shown—in the sanctum instead of on the transgressor, and is removed from the sanctum by prescribed rituals of purgation.¹⁶ Impurity stemming from

contrast, there is no precise legal terminology in Biblical Hebrew for the categories “prohibited” and “permitted” (MH אסור and מותר are not attested in this sense in BH), although these legal categories do underlie Biblical legislation and may serve as an organizing principle of a set of rules (e.g., Lev 21:1–4). Biblical law distinguishes between these categories by juxtaposing two verbal clauses, e.g., two *yiqṭōl* verbs, one of which is negated (see Exod 12:16; Deut 23:21a); or the form *w^eqāṭal . . . w^elō’ yiqṭōl* (Deut 23:25, 26); see GKC §107s, and Aba Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew* (Hebrew: *Leshon miḵra u-leshon ḥakhamim*; 2 vols.; 2d ed.; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1967–1971) 2.518. The adjectives “permitted” and “prohibited” may be formulated periphrastically, e.g., אשר יאכל (Lev 17:13); אשר היא לכם לאכלה (11:39) or הנאכלה (as opposed to לא תאכל, 11:47, compare אשר לא תעשינה, Lev 4:2, 13, 22, 27).

¹³ Paul Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (trans. Emerson Buchanan; Religious Perspectives 17; New York: Harper and Row, 1967) 31: “The world of defilement is a world anterior to the distinction between the ethical and the physical.”

¹⁴ The term “Priestly” (capitalized) will be used in what follows to mean “pertaining to the document P (as distinct from H),” whereas the term “priestly” will be used in a more inclusive sense, to include H as well.

¹⁵ David P. Wright, “The Spectrum of Priestly Impurity,” in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (ed. Gary A. Anderson and Saul M. Olyan; JSOTSup 125; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) 150–81. An earlier attempt is Frymer-Kensky’s distinction between “moral” and “ritual” impurities (Tikva Frymer-Kensky, “Pollution, Purification and Purgation in Biblical Israel,” in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday* [ed. Carol L. Meyers and M. O’Connor; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983] 399–413 and, with slight changes, eadem, “Pollution and Sacrifice: An Homage to Jacob Milgrom” [Seminar paper for the SBL Annual Meeting, 2001]). The same terminology is adopted by Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 21–42. Both Wright and Frymer-Kensky echo D. Hoffmann, *Das Buch Leviticus übersetzt und erklärt* (2 vols.; Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1905–1906), 1.340.

¹⁶ Milgrom has elaborated on this point extensively; the *locus classicus* of this argument is perhaps Jacob Milgrom, “Israel’s Sanctuary: The Priestly ‘Picture of Dorian Gray,’” *RB* 83 (1976): 390–99. Although the term טומאה is not explicitly mentioned in the sacrificial instructions in Leviticus 4–5, Leviticus 16 explicitly states that the blood sprinkled “inside the veil” (v. 15) and elsewhere in the Tent of Meeting (16b) is used to purge (כִּפֹּר) the adytum and the Tent “of the pollutions (טמאות) and transgressions of the Israelites, including all of their sins” (v. 16). For a detailed discussion and

deliberate transgressions may accumulate not only in the sanctum but also upon the transgressor and upon the land. It is removable from the sanctum by means of the ritual described in Leviticus 16, but no prescribed ritual enables the community to remove it from the land.

Tolerated impurities, on the other hand, stem from natural situations such as death and bodily emissions. Wright terms them “tolerated” since, though unwelcome, they often arise from involuntary situations or from situations that are desirable in and of themselves. Impurities of this type accumulate in physical bodies, are transmitted from one object to another according to a fixed set of regulations, and may be removed by a fixed set of purification rituals such as bathing and laundering. In addition, these impurities accumulate in the sanctum, contracted from afar like the prohibited impurities, and may be removed from the sanctum by a fixed set of purgation rituals.¹⁷

However, the dichotomy between “tolerated” and “prohibited” impurities is not always so clear-cut, and there are several borderline cases where an act is both defiling and prohibited. The most obvious examples are: sexual relations with a menstruant according to Lev 18:19 (cf. Lev 15:19–24); consumption of the flesh of an animal that was torn by wild beasts (according to Exod 22:30) or that died naturally (according to Deut 14:21);¹⁸ and certain prohibitions pertaining to priests and nazirites in the priestly literature (Lev 21:1–4; 11; 22:8; Num 6:6–7).¹⁹

One such borderline case is the system distinguishing between pure (טהור) and impure (טמא) animal species. At first glance, the impurity of the so-called “impure” (טמא) species ought to belong to the realm of tolerated impurities, stemming from physical bodies (animal flesh) and contracted by direct physical contact. However, as opposed to other impurities stemming from physical situations, a large number of animal impurities are by no means tolerated by the law—in fact, the law explicitly prohibits all Israelites to contract them. It seems that the intuitions underlying the distinction between pure and impure animal species are quite different from

evaluation of Milgrom’s theory see Roy Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

¹⁷ See Lev 12:6–8; 14:19, 31; 15:15–30; 16; Num 6:11. Apparently, tolerated impurities within the camp affect the sanctum from a distance immediately, even if the impurity is removed from the individual (or vessel) soon after defilement. However, in order to minimize its effect, impure individuals are required to undergo purification as soon as possible, and if they fail to do so they pose a threat to the sanctum and to themselves (note the formula “he has defiled the Tent/Temple of YHWH,” Num 19:13, 20). It is possible that P makes no ontological distinction between the impurity which applies to individuals and vessels, and the impurity which spreads out to affect the sanctum, especially when the two occur simultaneously (e.g., from touching a corpse). However, functionally they are clearly distinct, as is evident from the diverse rituals for their eradication.

¹⁸ These laws assume that such flesh is impure, though this is not explicitly stated; see below, n. 70.

¹⁹ In other situations, impurity and the prohibition may coincide, though they are of a different order, e.g., in the case of sexual prohibitions involving also “tolerated” ritual impurity, which Biblical law may refer to, perhaps figuratively, as “defilement” (Lev 18:20, 23; Num 5:13).

those underlying the system of tolerated impurities. This distinction is aimed at the categorization of the animal kingdom as such and is only indirectly linked to death-related impurity.²⁰ Evidence for this is the fact that the species itself is termed “pure” (טהור) or “impure” (טמא) in legal as well as non-legal contexts, regardless of the status of the particular animal. Thus, even when the specimens in question are alive, the species is termed “impure,”²¹ though live animals were certainly not considered ritually²² defiling.²³

■ The Ritual Classification of Animal Species in Ancient Israel

Information about the ritual classification of animal species in ancient Israelite religion, outside Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, is sparse.²⁴ One important

²⁰ Karl Elliger (*Leviticus* [HAT 1.4; Tübingen: Mohr, 1966] 150) correctly argues that, in contrast to other ritual impurities in the Bible, the ritual impurity attributed to animal species has “nicht immer religionsgeschichtliche Hintergründe.” Elliger, however, adopts a rather narrow definition of *Religionsgeschichte* here, limited to theological views. According to this particular view, he assumes, all other impurities hark back to a common intuition—proximity to the sphere of Death, which stands in contrast to the “Living God.” However, impurities stemming from death and bodily secretions, too, have a pre-theological history, and are in this sense no different from the “impurity” of animal species. Wright (“Spectrum,” 154, 165–69) includes this subsystem among the “death-related impurities,” but lists four reasons for regarding this group of impurities as exceptional within the spectrum of impurities. Clearly, the impurity of animal species is somewhat related to the general conceptions of impurity in ancient Israel, since impure species are not considered defiling while alive.

²¹ See Gen 7:2, 8, Lev 27:11, 27, Num 18:15, all of which refer to live animals.

²² Although all impurities discussed above are, strictly speaking, ritual, and though any system of categorization based upon them will be termed, in what follows, a “ritual classification system,” the terms “ritually impure/defiling” will be used narrowly, only with reference to those impurities which, as described above, accumulate in physical bodies and are removed by a fixed set of rituals such as bathing.

²³ See Lev 11:8, 24b–25, 32. Furthermore, note that the term “their carcass” (נבלתם) and the pronoun “they” (masculine, i.e., the animals) are interchangeable (24b//26b [MT]: 33a//35aa; note the clarification “when they are dead” in vv. 31, 32; and Ibn-Ezra, *The Commentary of Abraham ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch* [trans. J. F. Schachter; vol. 3; Hoboken: Ktav, 1986] on v. 26). Martin Noth (*Leviticus: A Commentary* [trans. J. E. Anderson; OTL; London: SCM, 1965] 95) presumed that v. 26b refers to living beasts, but see Elliger, *Leviticus*, 152–53. LXX (or its Vorlage), apparently wishing to prevent such a misunderstanding, replaced בשרם in 26b by τῶν θνησιμαίων αὐτῶν. In other ancient Near Eastern cultures, some animals were considered defiling while alive; see Herodotus, *Historia* 2.47; the Hittite “Instructions for Temple Officials,” (*ANET* 207–10); and James C. Moyer, “Hittite and Israelite Cultic Practices: A Selected Comparison,” in *Scripture in Context* (ed. William W. Hallo, James C. Moyer and Leo G. Perdue; vol. 2: *More Essays on the Comparative Method*; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 29–33. The Temple Scroll (46:1–3), according to Elisha Qimron’s reasonable reconstruction (*The Temple Scroll* [Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University Press; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1996] 66), requires that impure birds be kept away from the temple precincts (see *m. Mid* 4.6). This implies not only that the author considered impure birds to be ritually defiling (contrary to Mishnaic halacha), but also that they were considered defiling even while alive.

²⁴ Some data concerning the range of species commonly raised or hunted for food in different periods in ancient Israel, and concerning the more limited range of species commonly sacrificed, may be gleaned from historiographic and prophetic literature (e.g., Num 11:32, Judg 13:4, 7, 14, 1 Kgs

source of information is the non-Priestly Flood narrative in Genesis (the J account, along with several interpolations),²⁵ which refers to species that are “pure” (טהרה) and “not pure” (אשר איננה טהרה; אשר לא טהרה הוא, Gen 7:2, 8; 8:20). For the present argument it will suffice to note that, according to this story, the distinction between pure and impure animal species is no innovation of Israelite religion, but was recognized in antediluvian times. Furthermore, since Noah is intuitively familiar with it, YHWH has no need to enumerate the pure and impure species.²⁶ Thus it appears that the distinction does not stem from a divine decree, but rather from naturally inherent traits, easily discernible by any human being, Israelite and non-Israelite alike.

■ Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14

The remarkable similarity between Leviticus 11 and Deut 14:3–21a, especially in their respective lists of prohibited quadrupeds and birds, indicates that there exists a genetic relation between these two texts. Several models of this relation have been presented, scholars often emphasizing the textual evidence that accords with their general conception of the relationship between P and D, and explaining away the contradictory data accordingly. For the present context it will suffice to say that the most likely explanation is that a common Vorlage underlies the two texts, which can in fact be reconstructed with a relatively high degree of certainty.²⁷ This

5:3, 2 Kgs 6:25, Isa 33:4, Hos 9:4). The general picture that emerges from such passages roughly accords with the custom in Middle and Late Bronze Canaanite cities, to the extent that it is known from the osteonic findings from these periods and from the textual evidence from Ugarit, mostly regarding large mammals. Regarding non-mammals, birds and fish, evidence is particularly scanty. For a zooarchaeological survey of osteonic findings in Palestinian and Syrian cities, see Anneke T. Clason and Hilke Buitenhuis, “Patterns in Animal Food Resources in the Bronze Age in the Orient,” in *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on the Archaeozoology of Southwestern Asia and Adjacent Areas* (ed. H. Buitenhuis, L. Bartosiewicz and A. N. Choyke; *Archaeozoology of the Near East* 3; Groningen: ARC, 1988), 233–42. For a comprehensive summary, see Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law* (JSOTSup 140; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 124–80.

²⁵ This piece of evidence deserves a separate study. For a short survey of the relation between the two accounts of the Flood, see Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1987), 168.

²⁶ John Skinner (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* [ICC; 2d ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930] 152) and Claus Westermann (*Genesis 1–11* [trans. J. J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994] 428, following Gunkel, *contra* Dillmann) correctly assert that the J narrative accords with the history of religion better than does the P version. However, their assumption that, according to P, the distinction is an innovation of Israelite religion is incorrect. There are other considerations which lead P to ignore the distinction between pure and impure species in the Flood story; see Baruch J. Schwartz, *The Holiness Legislation: Studies in the Priestly Code* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999 [in Hebrew]) 79. In the Creation narratives, neither P nor J refer to this distinction; Pseudo-Jonathan, disturbed by this, supplied this extra piece of information (1:21, 24–25).

²⁷ August Dillmann, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (3d ed.; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1897) 525–26; S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (ICC; 3d ed., 1902; repr. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951) 157, 163–64; Elliger (*Leviticus*, 143–44). It is possible that priestly

will not be attempted here, but reference will be made to the presumed Vorlage as necessary.

■ Deuteronomy 14:3–21a

The general injunction at the head of the passage (14:3) indicates that the legislator is not attempting to define what is abominable and what is not. It is simply assumed to be common knowledge that certain species and the flesh of animals that died naturally are—by nature—*תועבה*, i.e., abominable (though not physically inedible). Based on this assumption, the legislator formulates categorical injunctions, addressed to the Israelites as a whole, prohibiting the consumption of such meat. Just as H forbids those whom it considers inherently holy, i.e., the priests,²⁸ to eat carrion (Lev 22:8), since, apparently, carrion is self-evidently, inherently impure, so D (like E, in Exod 22:30) prohibits those whom it considers inherently holy, i.e., all Israelites, to eat certain species as well as carrion, since these are self-evidently despicable by their very nature (14:21).²⁹ Further, the commands in vv. 11 and 20 (כל עוף טהור תאכלו, “You may eat any pure bird”; כל צפור טהרה תאכלו, “You may eat any pure winged creature”), presuppose that the audience knows which species are “pure” and which are not; the law simply asserts that whatever is known to be “pure” is permitted for consumption. No objection should be raised from the fact

literature was transmitted orally at first, and that the presumed common Vorlage never existed in writing (Houston, *Purity*, 64. However, the literal similarity between the two passages justifies the use of the term *Vorlage*, implying at least a fixed oral text. For a brief review of scholarly literature, see William L. Moran, “The Literary Connection between Lev 11:13–19 and Deut 14:12–18,” *CBQ* 28 (1966) 271–77; Meir Paran, *Forms of the Priestly Style in the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989 [in Hebrew]) 340.

²⁸ There is some disagreement among scholars regarding the precise difference between the holiness of priests and that of Israelites in H. According to Jacob Milgrom (*Leviticus: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [3 vols.; AB 3, 3A, 3B; New York: Doubleday, 1991–2001] 2:1803), H considered only the priests to be holy, but required lay Israelites to strive for holiness, which may be attained through obedience to YHWH. Saul M. Olyan (*Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult* [Princeton: University Press, 2000] 121–22, 173–34) has argued against this that the holiness of lay Israelites cannot be merely potential in H, since YHWH is often described in H as continually sanctifying the Israelites. However, he admits that there is a difference, at least in degree, between the holiness of priests and that of lay Israelites in H, as the laws concerning the consumption of holy meat clearly indicate. Although Olyan is correct in pointing out the similarity between the language employed in H to describe the holiness of priests and that used to describe the holiness of lay Israelites, there is an important linguistic distinction, which can hardly be fortuitous, namely that the predicate “holy” is attributed, even in H, only to the priests (21:23), never to lay Israelites. Hence it is reasonable to assume that the holiness of the priests in H (as in P) is viewed as inherent (or, at least, as resulting from a single act of sanctification at some point in history), whereas that of lay Israelites depends on constant activity on the part of YHWH. Note that neither the imperative, וקדשתו (21:8a; rendered correctly as: “you must treat [him] as holy” [JPS]), nor the command קדש יהיה לך (he shall be holy to you; 8b) imply that the priest is not holy to begin with. See Baruch J. Schwartz, “Israel’s Holiness: The Torah Traditions,” in *Purity and Holiness: The Heritage of Leviticus* (ed. M. J. H. M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz; JCPs 2; Leiden: Brill, 2000) esp. 52–58.

²⁹ See below, n. 70.

that D enumerates the “impure” birds even though it assumes that they are known, or from the fact that, having listed the criteria for the purity of large quadrupeds, it proceeds to enumerate ten pure species. By analogy to a modern situation, this would be similar to a general ban on cheap meat, followed by a list of fast food chains for clarification.

D mentions four main categories of animals: large quadrupeds, water animals, birds and flying insects, consistently distinguishing between species permitted for consumption (תאכלו, “you may eat,” 4, 6, 9, 11, 20) and species prohibited for consumption (לא תאכלו, “you shall not eat,” 7f., 10, 12, 21, see 19). The adjectives טמא (“impure,” 7, 8, 10, 19) and טהור (“pure,” 11, 20) are distributed less symmetrically, but in a manner that leaves little doubt that the dichotomy in its entirety holds true in each of the four groups: the species permitted for consumption are all “pure” and the prohibited species are all “impure.” What is not entirely clear is the precise semantic intent of these terms. The author may have intended “pure” and “impure” to serve as mere labels, designating species permitted and prohibited for consumption respectively, and nothing more; this is clearly how the terms are used in Gen 7:2, 8, Lev 27:11, 27, Num 18:15, where they refer to live specimens, which are certainly not considered ritually defiling. The author may, however, have been expressing the idea that species prohibited for consumption are also ritually defiling. We will return to this problem below.³⁰

In light of D’s general lack of interest in (“tolerated”) ritual impurity, the former possibility seems more likely. It appears that D adopted the terms “pure” and “impure” from its Vorlage, deliberately or unintentionally ignoring the ritual implications of these labels. Of course, D does not deny the existence of ritual impurity per se; thus, it does not discard the command “and their carcasses you shall not touch” in v. 8. But for D, the main function of the terms טהור and טמא, when pertaining to animal species, is to indicate permissibility or impermissibility for ingestion, not the power to contaminate.

Deuteronomy 14 thus presents a simple dichotomy: “okay” species on the one hand, i.e., species that are termed טהור, which may be eaten; and “not okay” species on the other hand, i.e., species termed טמא, which may not be eaten.³¹ Presumably, the author(s) of the Vorlage postulated the same simple dichotomy. This traditional dichotomy is also found in Lev 20:25, a passage belonging to the Holiness Code.³²

³⁰ See page 226–27 in this article.

³¹ In the terminology of Lévi-Strauss, Deuteronomy 14 reflects a rather “poor,” or rudimentary system of categorization, inasmuch as it is based on a single binary opposition: pure and permitted on the one hand, impure and prohibited on the other hand (Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 63, 161, 217). However, it should be noted that this relative “poverty” pertains to the number of possible ritual values attached to the categories of species, not to the physiological characteristics that are taken into account in this taxonomy.

³² The appendix of Leviticus 11 (vv. 43–45), attributed to H, reflects a similar view.

It is necessary to keep in mind that although the formulation of this system in Deuteronomy is the work of a literate elite, its presence in several pentateuchal sources (D, H, J, and presumably in the Vorlage, as we have seen), and its correspondence to the little corroborating evidence that archaeology is able to supply,³³ suggests that it reflects widespread conceptions, and—at least in part—common practice.

Therefore, if one were to endorse Lévi-Strauss's approach in this case, and attempt a reconstruction of a theoretical message encoded in this system, this reconstruction would presumably reflect certain basic conceptions prevalent in the society where the system was practiced. Such an attempt to reconstruct the unconscious conceptions of a culture no longer alive, through the medium of the texts its literary elite has produced, is fraught with tremendous difficulties.³⁴ As we shall see, the situation in Leviticus 11 is quite different.

■ Impurity and Prohibition in Leviticus 11

In contrast to the simple dichotomy in Deuteronomy 14, Leviticus 11 presents a complex legal grid, which will be examined in what follows.³⁵ In order for this complex grid to become apparent, it will be necessary to reconsider some widely circulating preconceptions and, in my view, misunderstandings, pertaining to the text of Leviticus 11 and to the perception of the relation between impurity and prohibition in Priestly literature. As will become apparent, the "Milgrom school" has done much to point out the misconceptions of previous interpretations in this regard, but in reality, Priestly legislation is even more radical in its innovative classification than Milgrom and some of his students have been disposed to acknowledge. The following analysis of Leviticus 11 will show that the legal categories, "impure," "prohibited for consumption," and "prohibited for contact" are entirely contingent, and—wherever possible—legally unrelated.

However, before analyzing the system portrayed in Leviticus 11, one must first acknowledge a general tendency in the priestly writings: The priestly legislators generally refrain from prescribing the required measures for ritual purifications in cases where ritual contamination should not have occurred in the first place.

³³ See above, n. 24.

³⁴ In this case, in particular, there are a number of insurmountable difficulties: many of the species mentioned by name are unidentifiable; one is often at a loss regarding any symbolic or other meaning which these species may have had; it is unclear whether the physical and behavioral characteristics listed for some of the species were considered to be the reason for their classification as pure or impure, or merely a means of identification; and a structural interpretation is impeded by the fact that one lacks information about the structure of the system of purity/impurity in ancient Israel beyond what the text offers. For a general discussion of the methodological difficulties in applying anthropological tools to the study of Biblical texts, see *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament* (ed. Bernhard Lang; Issues in Religion and Theology 8; Philadelphia: Fortress; London: SPCK, 1985) 1–20.

³⁵ The English translation cited here closely follows that of Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1:643–45. Where my own translation departs significantly from Milgrom's, reason is given below.

Thus, no purification instructions are prescribed for impurity contracted through the consumption of animals that are forbidden for consumption, or—as argued below—for impurity contracted through contact with animals whose carcass one is forbidden to touch. Priests, who are forbidden to eat carrion, are not told how to purify themselves if they do so (Lev 22:8); but Israelites, who may freely contaminate themselves by eating carrion according to the priestly legislators (though certainly not according to Exod 22:30 and Deut 14:21a), are told exactly how to purify themselves (Lev 11:40; 17:15).³⁶

Thus one may formulate a rule of thumb, which can serve as a working hypothesis elsewhere in priestly literature: wherever the author supplies instructions for purification from impurity, the impurity in question is “tolerated”; but where the author does not supply these instructions, the impurity is of the prohibited type. Once this characteristic is acknowledged, it is possible to demonstrate how the authors of Leviticus 11 understood the relation between impurity and prohibition.

■ The First Tetralemma in Leviticus 11

The chapter treats several groups of animals, presented in a seemingly disorderly manner: large quadrupeds (2bβ–8), water animals (9–12), large flying creatures (or, for the sake of simplicity, “birds,” 13–19), flying insects (20–23), again large quadrupeds (24–28), land swarmer (29–38), again large quadrupeds (39–40), and once again land swarmer (41–44). An explanation of this apparent disorder would entail a detailed diachronic analysis of the text, which is outside the scope of the present study.³⁷ For the sake of clarity, the discussion will be confined at first, for the most part, to the text in its final form; only in conclusion will detailed reference be made to the strata of the chapter.

It has long been noticed that in the main body of the chapter (vv. 1–42, 46–47),³⁸ the terms שָׁקֵץ and טָמֵא appear to be mutually exclusive. An animal is either termed שָׁקֵץ or טָמֵא, never both. Hence, Milgrom’s insightful distinction, intimated in the Sifra and noticed by David Zvi Hoffmann,³⁹ is basically true: טָמֵא, when attributed

³⁶ This tendency is logical enough, for evidently the legislators did not deem it necessary to offer purification instructions where contamination should not exist. Interestingly, the tendency is consistently carried through even in the absence of these logical considerations. This is true especially in the case of the Nazirite (Num 6), who is forbidden to come into contact with the dead. The priestly legislator discusses the possibility of inadvertent defilement of the Nazirite (v 9), and prescribes the measures to be taken by the Nazirite in order to perform expiation and renew his oath; however, nothing is said of the (apparently obvious) need for the Nazirite to purify himself. This tendency may even underlie the much disputed case of the menstruant and the זִכָּה in P; see Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1:940–41 and below, n. 72.

³⁷ See below, n. 64.

³⁸ The term “the main body of the chapter” is used here to designate the P section. This does not include the concluding exhortation (vv. 43–45 at least), long recognized as stemming not from P but from H. See Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 69; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1.683–88, 694.

³⁹ Hoffmann, *Leviticus*, 1:340; Jacob Milgrom, “Two Biblical Hebrew Priestly Terms: *Šeqeš*

to a species, designates “ritually defiling, *and also* prohibited for consumption”; שֶׁקֶץ indicates “prohibited for consumption, but *not* ritually defiling.” However, if one wishes to account for the MT of 7:21, which, unless emended, mentions an impure שֶׁקֶץ, and to take the term וְכָל in 11:41 as covering all land-swarmlers, including the impure ones listed in vv. 29–30, it may be more accurate to modify Milgrom’s definition of שֶׁקֶץ to “prohibited for consumption” (with nothing said of ritual impurity). Furthermore, contrary to a common misconception, there is little reason to imagine that in P’s view, שֶׁקֶץ animals could ritually defile even through ingestion.⁴⁰

Milgrom notes correctly that the author of the H appendix (vv. 43–45, according to Milgrom) was unaware of this distinction, as terms derived from the stems שֶׁקֶץ and טָמֵא are used interchangeably in those verses.

The terminological distinction between שֶׁקֶץ and טָמֵא has immediate legal implications: not every animal that is prohibited for consumption is considered ritually impure. Thus, only the flesh of large quadrupeds and of eight species of land-swarmlers, which are termed טָמֵא, may convey ritual impurity (see Lev 5:2, as well as the precise wording of 11:29a and 22:5, regarding land-swarmlers).⁴¹ All other land-swarmlers, as well as all birds and water animals, whether permitted for consumption or not, are ritually pure; i.e., they convey impurity neither by contact nor by consumption. Like any other transgression in P, consumption of prohibited birds or fish may give rise to a miasma-like substance, which clings to the sanctum and must be purged by the blood of a purgation offering,⁴² but the individual remains pure: he need not undergo ritual ablutions or wait until sunset before approaching the sanctum.

and *Ṭāmē’*,” *Ma‘arav* 8 (1992) 107–16.

⁴⁰ This view is found even in the writings of the “Milgrom school.” Milgrom himself is at times somewhat unclear about the matter. In one place, for example, he states that the animals termed שֶׁקֶץ “defile not by contact but only by ingestion” (*Leviticus* 1:648, see also 656, 694), insinuating that these animals are ritually impure, though defiling only through ingestion (like the flesh of an animal that dies of itself in most strata of P, except for Lev 11:39–40, on which see below, n. 43). However, he also explicitly states that “*šeqeš* animals are cultically pure” (656), indicating that in the above-mentioned use of “defile”, he may have meant metaphoric defilement. Wright, however, presumes that “all the prohibited animals . . . probably polluted by eating” (“Spectrum”, 167, n. 1; see also idem, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* [SBLDS 101; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987] 203–4), meaning that the prohibited water animals, birds and flying insects conveyed ritual impurity by ingestion, though not by contact. I find little textual evidence for this presupposition.

⁴¹ All three texts indicate that some but not all land swarmlers convey ritual impurity. Lev 5:2 mentions “the carcass of an impure swarming thing,” implying that there are also (carcasses of) pure swarm. Similarly, 22:5 speaks of “a man who touches a swarming thing by which he is made unclean or any human being by whom he is made unclean” (אוֹ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַנּוּעַ בְּכָל שְׂרֵץ אֲשֶׁר) (טָמֵא לוֹ אוֹ בְּאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יִטְמָא לוֹ), indicating that not every swarming thing conveys impurity (just as not every human conveys impurity). The precise wording of 11:29a, “The following shall be impure for you from among the things that swarm on the earth” (וְזֶה לָכֶם הַטָּמֵא בְּשֶׂרֶץ הַשָּׂרֵץ עַל הָאָרֶץ), with its use of the partitive בִּי, unambiguously implies the same.

⁴² See above, n. 16.

The other side of this legal distinction between impurity and prohibition is that not every animal said to be impure, i.e., that ritually contaminates, is prohibited for consumption. Although every *species* that is termed טמא is, in fact, prohibited for consumption, there is a type of meat that, though ritually contaminating, is permitted for consumption. Verses 39–40 specify that if a quadruped of a species permitted for consumption—e.g., a cow—dies of itself, its carcass is ritually contaminating. However, here, as elsewhere in priestly literature,⁴³ it is evident that lay Israelites are permitted to become contaminated by eating the flesh of a cow that died of itself; it is only priests that are prohibited to do so (7:24; 22:8). To understand this point in context, it need only be remembered that in priestly literature, becoming ritually impure is generally not considered a vice—though subsequent purification may be demanded. Impurity is often inevitable, and it is even expected of Israelites as well as priests to become ritually impure at times (e.g., 15:18, 21:2–3).

Application of the rule of thumb we have formulated above confirms this. When discussing the eight impure land-swarms (v. 31) and most quadrupeds (vv. 24–25), the legislator offers instructions for purification from external contact only, not from consumption, since such flesh should not be consumed in the first place. By contrast, vv. 39–40 supply instructions for purification from touching, carrying *and* eating the flesh of a permitted quadruped that died naturally, since contacting and eating such flesh are equally permitted.

Thus it becomes evident that in the ritual taxonomy of Leviticus 11 a simple dichotomy has been replaced by a tetralemma, where all combinations are possible: pure and permitted for consumption, pure and prohibited, impure and permitted, impure and prohibited, as demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2.

⁴³ As opposed to D and E; see Milgrom, *Leviticus* 2:1484–86. The law in vv. 39–40, however, diverges from the commonly accepted law in priestly literature in one aspect. Whereas elsewhere P and H imply that the טמא of “pure” animals ritually defiles only by ingestion, the law in vv. 39–40 explicitly states that it ritually defiles by external contact as well; see idem, *Leviticus* 1:681–82, where the proof from Lev 5:2; 7:21; 22:8 (but not the additional argument based on 7:24; 22:5) is conclusive.

Table 1: THE TRADITIONAL
DICHOTOMY

PURE AND PERMITTED	IMPURE AND PROHIBITED
Cow	Cow (Carcass)
Carp	Crayfish
Canary	Crow
	Cockroach

Table 2: LEVITICUS 11 (CONSUMPTION)

CONSUMPTION	A. Pure	B. Impure
1. PERMITTED	Cow	Cow (Carcass)
2. PROHIBITED	Crow	Camel

However, this is only half of the picture. For the legislators have in fact created a much more complex system of categorization, applying this differentiating logic (“compartmentalizing,” as Klawans would term it),⁴⁴ not only to the consumption of animals but also to contact with their carcasses.

■ The Second Tetralemma in Leviticus 11: The Same Pattern Repeated

Verse 3 creates a simple distinction: quadrupeds with split hoofs that chew their cud may be eaten, all others by implication may not. In vv. 4–8 four species are named—the only examples known to the author—which were believed to fulfill one of the criteria but not the other.⁴⁵ Verse 8 clearly declares these four species impure, and forbids both touching their carcasses and eating their flesh.

Since the laity is not normally commanded to avoid ritual impurity, commentators ancient and modern have refrained from interpreting the command “and their carcasses you shall not touch” (8aβ) literally.⁴⁶ Instead, some have viewed these words as a precaution, a warning not legally binding, to keep away from prohibited flesh.⁴⁷ However, the unequivocal imperative does not warrant exegetical twists of

⁴⁴ Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*, notably in his discussion of Tannaitic literature, e.g., 93.
⁴⁵ The question of whether the criteria for a quadruped’s purity are formally counted as two (having split hoofs; chewing its cud) or three (being hoofed; the hoofs being split; chewing its cud) may remain unanswered, as the grammar of Lev 11:3, Deut 14:6 allows both readings. For the sake of clarity, the former method of counting is followed here.
⁴⁶ In this I refer to commentators who were aware of the general distinction between impurity and prohibition in P. Paradoxically, commentators such as Noth (*Leviticus*, 93), who simply assumed that in the dietary system, every species that is שׂמא or שׂקץ is also ritually defiling and furthermore—must not be contacted, had no qualms about interpreting this verse literally.
⁴⁷ See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 654, who suggests that this prohibition is not punishable; Edwin Firmage (“The Biblical Dietary Laws and the Concept of Holiness” in *Studies in the Pentateuch* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 41; Leiden: Brill, 1990) 207; B. A. Levine, *Leviticus* (The JPS Torah

this sort, and leaves little doubt as to the general purport of the verse, prohibiting the laity from becoming ritually defiled by the carcasses of (at least) four animals.⁴⁸

Presumably, this law, which is paralleled in Deut 14:8 and probably derives from the common Vorlage,⁴⁹ was originally intended to apply to quadrupeds lacking both criteria as well, such as dogs and donkeys; in their original context, the four exceptions were probably named simply to remove all doubt. Yet, in the context of Leviticus 11, I submit, an interesting transformation took place.

Technically speaking, though quadrupeds lacking both criteria are prohibited for consumption by implication (v. 3), vv. 2–8 say nothing at all of their ritual impurity, leaving at least two theoretical possibilities open: a) pawed quadrupeds and *perissodactyla* (e.g., donkeys) are ritually pure, like the prohibited birds and all but eight species of land-swarmers; or b) they are ritually impure, but in contrast to the four exceptional species, it is permissible to become defiled by touching their carcasses, just as lay Israelites are permitted to become defiled through contact with a human corpse.

Verses 24–28 solve this dilemma, addressing precisely those groups of animals not discussed in vv. 2–8: quadrupeds lacking both criteria for purity, having either plain hoofs or no hoofs at all. The very fact that these verses settle what vv. 2–8 had left unsettled suggests that they are logically dependent upon them. Furthermore, their dependency on vv. 2–8 is demonstrable on grammatical grounds as well, as soon as one recognizes the precise purport of the opening words of v. 24, ולאֵלֶּה תִּטְמָאוּ. Milgrom and others understand this formula simply to mean “and by these you shall become impure”;⁵⁰ but this formulation probably has a more

Commentary; Philadelphia: JPS, 1989) 67. Some medieval commentators, following the *Sifra*, offer a constrictive interpretation of the verse, applying it only to the time of the festivals, when pilgrims were in constant contact with the sancta; see Houston, *Purity*, 40.

⁴⁸ *Sifra* (Shemini, 2) suggests this reading and rejects it. Ibn Ezra [*Commentary*, 3:42] adheres to the literal sense of the verse, contrary to rabbinic halakhic tradition. Many scholars who understand this prohibition literally simply suppose that defilement by contact with *any* impure animal is prohibited, some even extending this supposition to the carcass of a “pure” animal that died of itself. See C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch* (vol. 1 of *Commentary on the Old Testament*; trans. J. Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986) 361; Noth, *Leviticus*, 93; and more recently J. E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (OTL; Dallas: Word, 1992) 158. David P. Wright correctly proposes that the legislators prohibited contact with the carcasses of these four animals only (“Spectrum,” 166). For an appraisal of Mary Douglas’s interesting insight on the special significance of these four exceptional species, see Houston, *Purity*, 40, 98.

⁴⁹ It is unlikely that the law וּבְנִבְלָתָם לֹא תִנְעֹו is a late interpolation (thus A. B. Ehrlich, *Leviticus—Numeri—Deuteronomium* (vol. 2 of *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1909; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1968] 38), since it appears in Deuteronomy 14 as well.

⁵⁰ The formula וּלֹאֵלֶּה תִּטְמָאוּ, as most commentators note, is the beginning of a new passage. See Rolf Rendtorff, *Die Gesetze in der Priesterschrift. Eine gattungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (FRLANT, n.F. 44; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954) 41–42 and n. 15; Noth, *Leviticus*, 94; Levine, *Leviticus*, 69; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1:667. However, several scholars adopt the view held by Ibn Ezra, that the demonstrative here refers back to the species mentioned in the previous verses; see B. D. Eerdmans, *Das Buch Leviticus* (Alttestamentliche Studien 4; Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1912) 60. Dillmann and Wright opine that two readings are possible: a minimalist reading, according to

precise legal thrust. A nearly identical formulation, in which the indirect object irregularly precedes the *yiqtol* form of a verb, is found in Lev 21:3 in a similar context, where it is both connective and contrastive in relation to what precedes it. The formula *לֹא יִטְמָא*, used by the priestly legislators in Lev 21:3, indicates that whereas it is generally forbidden for a priest to become defiled through contact with the dead (21:1b, 4b), he is nevertheless permitted to become defiled through contact with the corpse of a close relative, such as his virgin sister. Therefore, these words should be translated “by *her* (in contrast to most others) he is permitted to become defiled.”⁵¹ Similarly, in Lev 11:24, this contrastive and connective formula should be translated: “By *these*, however, you are permitted to become defiled.” This rendering has immediate legal implications: it appears that the legislators wished to contrast the law of the four exceptional quadrupeds with that of all other quadrupeds prohibited for consumption. Whereas one is forbidden to become ritually defiled by contacting the former (8aβ), the latter—though no less defiling—may be touched at will.

This counterintuitive conclusion stands in contrast to the ancient view, held by modern commentators as well. However, it seems to be the correct reading, since, aside from the fact that it accords with the simple words of the legislators, which could not be more explicit, this view is also supported by the fact that, according to the rule of thumb we have formulated, the priestly legislators tend to offer instructions for purification only where defilement is not prohibited in the first place. In contrast to the elaborate laws of purification from contact with the eight impure land-swarmers, *perissodactyla* and hoofless animals, in the case of the four exceptional species, no instructions for purification are offered at all, since, as v. 8 explicitly states, it is forbidden to eat or touch their carcasses.

The juxtaposition of vv. 2–8 and 24–28, noted above, establishes the distinction between impure animals whose carcasses may be touched and impure animals whose carcasses may not be touched. As for the ritually pure animals, based on all that is known about ancient Israelite religion, there ought to be no reason to prohibit physical contact with their carcasses. And yet, in addition to the prohibition against eating the flesh of certain species of water animals (11bα), v. 11 also contains a prohibition against coming in contact with their carcasses (11bβ: *וְאַתָּה וְבִלְתָּם תִּשְׁקְצוּ*, “and you shall abominate their carcasses”), even though they are ritually pure!

which the demonstrative *וְלֹאֵלֶּה* refers only to what follows, and a more inclusive reading, according to which both what precedes and what follows are intended. See Dillmann, *Exodus und Leviticus*, 545; Wright, *Disposal*, 204.

⁵¹ Regarding the use of a simple *yiqtol* to connote permission, see above, n. 12. Note that the idiom *לֹא יִטְמָא* indicates becoming impure *by* (i.e., by coming in direct or indirect contact with) a ritually contaminating person or object (see Lev 22:5). In the case of Lev 21:3 (though clearly not in 11:24), the idiom may carry overtones of becoming defiled *for the sake of* (burying) a person, though this is probably not the primary reading (see Num. 9:6–7). For an attempt to draw important theoretical conclusions from the distinction between *לֹא יִטְמָא* and *טָמֵא בִּי*, see Hoffmann, *Leviticus*, 1.340. However, the linguistic data adduced by Hoffmann are inconclusive (see for example Lev 5:3).

This command has been a stumbling block for commentators ancient and modern.⁵² It has been explained away as an interpolation, as a stylistic device aimed at mirroring v. 8, or as a mere attempt to lend force to the prohibition against consumption, but carrying no legal force of its own.⁵³ However, these attempts only reveal how difficult it has been for commentators to accept the unequivocal command as it stands, contradicting, as it were, their own preconceptions about the relation between prohibition against contact on the one hand, and ritual impurity on the other hand. Rather, it appears that here, the legislator made use of the non-technical sense of the verb שָׁקַץ, attested in Deut 7:26 and elsewhere, refining its meaning to carry a new legal sense: prohibition of contact that is unlinked to ritual impurity.

This counterintuitive hypothesis is supported by two facts: firstly, 11b is structurally identical to 8a. One may infer that just as the syndetic structure in v. 8 serves to present two distinct prohibitions (מִבֶּשֶׂר לֹא תֹאכְלוּ וּבִנְבִלָתָם לֹא תִנְעוּ), literally: “Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch”) linked to a single definition (טֶמֶאִים, 8b), by the same token, the same structure in 11b (מִבֶּשֶׂר לֹא תֹאכְלוּ וְאֵת נְבִלָתָם תִּשְׁקֹצוּ), literally: “Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall regard as detestable”) indicates two different prohibitions, linked to a single definition (שָׁקֵץ, 10–11a). Secondly, the choice of the term נְבִלָה (“carcass”) in 11bβ, as opposed to בֶּשֶׂר (“flesh”) in 11bα is significant: it indicates that the first command refers to the status of the carcass as potential food (meat), whereas the second refers to its status as a material body (a carcass) susceptible to physical contact. This same exact terminological distinction is found in v. 8: בֶּשֶׂר is the object of dietary laws, whereas נְבִלָה is the object of legislation concerned with ritual impurity.⁵⁴

⁵² Again, I refer here only to those commentators who were in fact aware of the legal distinction between שָׁקֵץ and טֶמֶא. Paradoxically, commentators who were not aware of this distinction had no qualms about understanding this command literally, and therefore interpreted it correctly (e.g., Noth, *Leviticus*, 93).

⁵³ The assumption that no particular prohibition is implied here, or that these words are a stylistic device intended to mirror v. 8 or to lend force to the prohibition of consumption (Hoffmann, *Leviticus*, 333; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1:656), is unlikely, considering the legal, technical nature of the text. It is even less likely that an interpolator or “editor” would insert an unequivocal prohibition only in order to create a link with v. 8 (Ehrlich, *Randglossen*, 38; Houston, *Purity*, 41). Pseudo-Jonathan did attribute a legal force to this command, which he understood as a prohibition against profiting from such flesh. Houston (*Purity*, 40) admits that it is difficult to assume a practical distinction between the two commands, וּבִנְבִלָתָם לֹא תִנְעוּ (v. 8) and וְאֵת נְבִלָתָם תִּשְׁקֹצוּ (v. 11).

⁵⁴ The distinction between בֶּשֶׂר (“flesh”) and נְבִלָה (“carrion, carcass”) here is not in the way in which the animal is killed (*contra* Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1:653), as Exod 22:30 indicates, but in the point of view of the writer. The cadaver of an animal may be termed בֶּשֶׂר only inasmuch as it is conceived as potential food (even prohibited food, 8aα, 11bα, or food for animals Gen 40:19, II Kgs 9:36). When it is viewed not as food, but as a physical body carried or touched, it is termed נְבִלָה (8aβ, 11bβ, 25).

This intriguing legislation completes the logical symmetry of P's ritual taxonomy: not only is there a distinction between animals that are pure and permitted for consumption; pure and prohibited for consumption; impure and permitted for consumption; or impure and prohibited for consumption; but also between species that are pure and permitted to touch; pure and prohibited to touch; impure and permitted to touch; or impure and prohibited to touch, as demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3: LEVITICUS11 (CONTACT)

Contact	A. Pure	B. Impure
1. Permitted	Cow, Canary	Cat, Chameleon
2. Prohibited	Crayfish	Camel

■ Theoretical Implications: Conceptual Legislation and Normative Legislation

The complex system of classification we have identified in Leviticus 11 is, admittedly, not laid out explicitly and systematically in the text. From the substantive point of view as well, it definitely appears to be an artificial (literary) construction, not common practice in ancient Israel. Yet this is the edifice created by the priests who formulated the chapter, not a figment of the modern reader's imagination: all eight permutations enumerated above are indeed present in the chapter in its given form.

Most likely, the complex system crystallized in Leviticus 11 never took root in Israelite society. It stands to reason that a farmer, finding a dead mouse (which, according to Leviticus 11, one is permitted touch, though it is ritually defiling) in the barn, would be likely to refrain from touching it, and that the same farmer would find it more practical to drag away a dead camel (which, according to Leviticus 11, one is prohibited to touch or carry) than to ask a non-Israelite to do so. Even if one does not accept the position that P originated as a secret document, known

only to priests,⁵⁵ it is doubtful that Leviticus 11 ever served as a normative basis for Israelite society at any given historical period. The very fact that the law refers to seemingly unlikely situations (e.g., touching a dead shark, eating a bat) and to species that according to textual evidence as well as osteonic findings were not commonly considered potential food in ancient Israel,⁵⁶ indicates that the legislators' interest was conceptual rather than normative.⁵⁷

What was the theoretical goal that the authors hoped to achieve by arranging the animal kingdom according to two contingent systems of classification? What motivated them to reject the traditional dichotomy and reclassify the animal kingdom in a more complicated and less practicable way than their predecessors?

The traditional conception, which the authors of Leviticus 11 rejected, assumed that the set of species prohibited for consumption and the set of species designated as "impure" are equal sets, as are the set of species permitted for consumption and the set of species designated as "pure." Thus, according to Deuteronomy 14, the status of a species as permitted or prohibited for consumption follows from its natural status⁵⁸ as "pure" or "impure," respectively. D's law, which reads literally "any pure bird—you may eat" (כל צפור טהרה תאכלו), Deut 14:11), says simply: that which is by nature known to be pure is permitted as food.

The Priestly legislators, too, accepted the basic assumption that the impurity of certain species is naturally inherent and obvious to all human beings, Israelite and

⁵⁵ Some of the law codes in the Bible and in the ancient Near East were apparently never implemented, see the opening caveat in David Daube, *Studies in Biblical Law* (Cambridge: University Press, 1947). This is true even if one rejects the radical approach of Cohen and Haran, that P was a secret document (Chayim Cohen, "Was the P Document Secret?," *JANESCU* 1 [1969] 39–44; Menahem Haran, "Behind the Scenes of History: Determining the Date of the Priestly Source," *JBL* 100 [1981] 321–23; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 2:1410–11). Leviticus 11, as opposed to Chapter 16 and the Babylonian New Year's ritual text published by Thureau-Dangin, is explicitly addressed to the whole community (11:1).

⁵⁶ The ancient prohibition of "impure" animal species recorded in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 appears to have had little affect on the eating habits of the society in Palestine in the Late Bronze Age. The sole exception is the pig, which was eaten to a small extent in some Canaanite cities, see above, n. 24.

⁵⁷ See Wright, "Spectrum," 153, and Houston, *Purity*, 231, who views the laws as "utopian." At first glance, the verses seem to contain further evidence of this. It has been noted that the legislators choose examples based on numbers divisible by four (four exceptional impure quadrupeds, four types of locust, eight impure land swarms, twenty birds, four of which are followed by למינה/למינה/למינו). This would corroborate the view that the authors are interested in theoretical formulations, not merely in practical legislation. However, textual evidence is somewhat uncertain (LXX has five למינה/ה, and the reading ואת החסידה ואת האנפה may be preferable to ואת החסידה האנפה, thus making twenty-one birds). Furthermore, some of these "quadruples" were not formulated by P but were dictated by the Vorlage (twenty birds) or determined by the zoological horizons of the authors (four quadrupeds lacking partial criteria for purity). At best, the authors of Leviticus 11 may have noticed the (fortuitous) phenomenon in the Vorlage and imitated it, as in the case of the locusts and the eight land swarms (assuming that this list is not a legacy from an earlier source). In Deut 14 this numerical order is not observed, since D inserted a list of ten permitted quadrupeds.

⁵⁸ For an interesting attempt to couch the distinction between "pure" and "impure" species in the context of Creation, see Milgrom, "Two Biblical Hebrew Priestly Terms," esp. 110–11.

non-Israelite alike.⁵⁹ However, they sought to sever the link between impurity, a biological trait they assumed to be present in specific species since creation, and prohibition, a religious category.⁶⁰ In fact, what we have here is a clash between νόμος and φύσις in ancient Israelite religion. By claiming that the status of an animal as permitted or prohibited for consumption or contact is independent of its status as pure or impure, the legislator argued that permission and prohibition are divine decrees, which are imposed upon, not derived from, the natural order.

It should be noted that the juxtaposition of the categorization systems permitted/prohibited and pure/impure is not only implicit in the legal system of Leviticus 11; it is also explicitly referred to in the colophon of the chapter (v. 47): “to make a distinction between the impure and the pure, and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.”⁶¹ In light of Lévi-Strauss’s theory, which views animal categorization systems as a framework within which societies tend to formulate their conceptions of the relation between culture and nature, it is striking that an explicit juxtaposition of the two categorization systems, pure/impure and permitted/prohibited, is found only in Leviticus 11, a chapter dedicated to the ritual taxonomy of animals, and nowhere else in Biblical law.

⁵⁹ Houston (*Purity*, 224, 243–4, 249) ascribes to D and P the position that the distinction between pure and impure species is universal and inherent in Creation. There is much truth in his assertion that the difference between the two sources is that D forbade Israelites to eat impure flesh for considerations of national dignity, whereas P forbade them since they were cultically unacceptable. See also idem, “Towards an Integrated Reading of the Dietary Laws of Leviticus,” in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception* (ed. Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kugler; VTSup 93; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 159, where he argues that this conception was common to J and H as well; see Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 195–99, whose theoretical model regarding “status assignation” (ascription vs. achievement) is only imperfectly applicable here.

⁶⁰ The wording of the recurrent phrase, “it is (or: they are) impure *for you*” (לכם, vv. 4, 5, 6, 8, etc.), should not mislead one to conclude that the authors considered the animals to be impure only from an Israelite point of view. By the specification, “for you,” the authors wished to indicate that the legal implications of this universally acknowledged impurity apply to Israelites only. A telling example of such usage is found in Exod 31:12–17. Although the holiness of the Sabbath is clearly believed to be inherent in nature, stemming from Creation (v. 17), the legislator still refers to it as holy “for you” (v. 14), since the legal implications of this natural holiness apply to Israelites alone.

⁶¹ Regarding the relative dating of the colophons (vv. 46–47), see Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1.694–5. Theoretically, 47b may be read as an explanation of 47a (“between the impure and the pure, *that is*, between animals which may be eaten and animals which may not be eaten”), but this is syntactically unlikely. Elsewhere in Hebrew Bible, the syntactic chain Y וּבֵין X וּבֵין B וּבֵין A בֵּין always designates two distinct dichotomies which do not overlap, as in Gen 13:8, where the two dichotomies refer to two distinct aspects of a conflict; in Lev 10:10; 20:25, 1 Sam 20:42, where two distinct applications of a single treaty are indicated; and in Ezek 22:2; 44:23. When two dichotomies fully overlap, the structure is asyndetic (see Mal 3:18). Thus, the colophon perfectly summarizes the two main distinctions made in the chapter, between pure and impure animals on the one hand, and between animals prohibited and permitted for consumption on the other hand.

■ The Text-History of Leviticus 11

Thus far it has been shown that Leviticus 11, in its final form, encodes a theoretical argument in the innovative, complex ritual taxonomy that it presents. However, the complex symmetrical structure, reconstructed in the tables above, was not arrived at at once, but is rather the result of gradual crystallization.

In the early 1990's, Milgrom and Wright engaged in a discussion aimed at reconstructing the text-history of Leviticus 11.⁶² According to Milgrom's hypothesis, accepted for the most part by Wright, the chapter consists of three Priestly strata (designated P₁, P₂ and P₃, respectively) and one stratum of H.⁶³ Though their relative dating of these strata may require further examination,⁶⁴ it is clear from internal evidence that there are in fact at least three Priestly strata in the chapter, each logically dependent upon its predecessors. Furthermore, when read in light of Lévi-Strauss's theory, it is evident that the three Priestly strata in the chapter were aiming at a single theoretical goal: the complete distinction between the natural category, "impure," and the cultural category, "prohibited." Each stratum pressed this theoretical development a step further, so that the distinction took shape gradually. This process may be described in short as follows:

The ancient text that served as the Vorlage of the chapter (and, it will be recalled, of Deuteronomy 14 as well),⁶⁵ referred to four groups of animals: large quadrupeds, water animals, birds, and flying insects. In each group, the species prohibited for consumption were defined as "impure," and at times the author added the phrase "you shall not eat" (לֹא תֹאכְלוּ) or "they shall not be eaten" (לֹא יֵאָכְלוּ). Regarding four exceptional species listed by name, a command was added prohibiting contact with their carcasses, but context made it clear that all impure large quadrupeds (at least) were included in the prohibition.

The earliest Priestly stratum (P₁, which consisted of vv. 1–23, 41–42), was a reworking of this Vorlage. In the alterations introduced by P₁ in this Vorlage we can detect, in a nascent form at least, the distinction between the prohibited and the impure, which presents the two systems as independent. P₁ argued that not all animals prohibited for consumption were ritually defiling. In order to make this

⁶² J. Milgrom, "The Composition of Leviticus, Chapter 11," in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (ed. G. Anderson and S. M. Olyan; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 182–91; idem, *Leviticus* 1:691–8; vs. Wright, *Disposal*, 201; "Spectrum," 168 n. 1; and quoted in Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1:698 ("postscript").

⁶³ We will follow Milgrom and Wright (n. 62) in using these *sigla*. It should be noted that the distinction between three strata which are closely related in language and in ideology, and one which is distinct in these respects, derives from the internal evidence of Leviticus 11 alone and is therefore independent of Milgrom's distinction between P₁ and P₂ elsewhere in Leviticus (*Leviticus* 1:61–63).

⁶⁴ For a reevaluation of the opinions of Milgrom and Wright and an alternative relative dating of the strata in the chapter, see N. S. Meshel, "The Structure and Composition of Leviticus 11: A New Proposal" [forthcoming].

⁶⁵ See above, 209–12.

point, P_1 coined a new, technical use of the term שִׁקָּץ, and claimed that only the prohibited large quadrupeds were ritually impure, whereas the prohibited water animals and birds were ritually pure.

The author who appended P_2 (vv. 24–38) to P_1 recognized the conceptual innovation of P_1 and wished to develop it, distinguishing between impure animals whose carcasses one may touch and become ritually contaminated by, and other impure animals whose carcasses must be avoided. Furthermore, this author noted that eight of the land-swarmlers, and those eight alone, are ritually impure, and that it is perfectly permissible to touch their (ritually contaminating) carcasses.

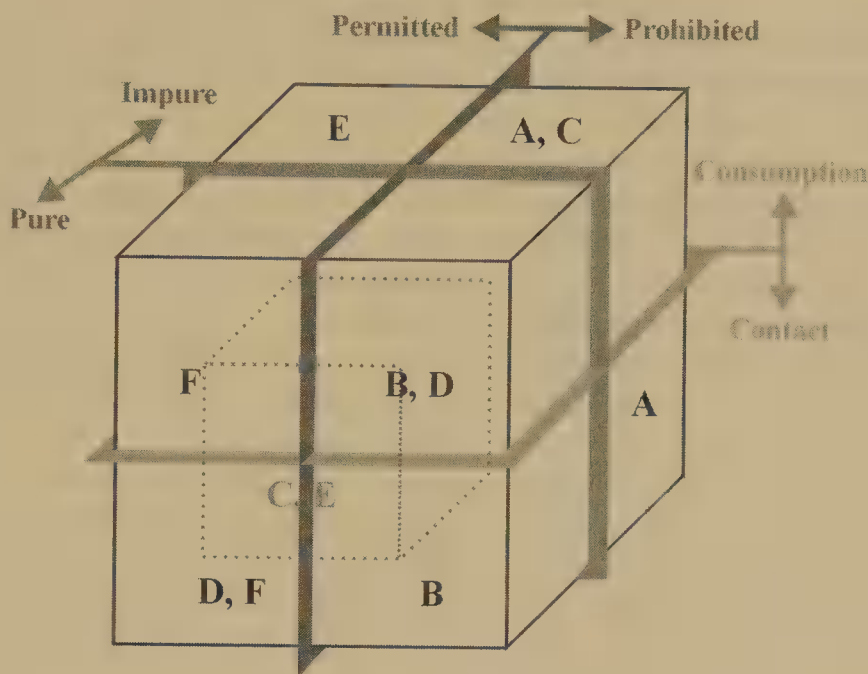
The third stratum, P_3 (vv. 39–40), in an unprecedented, strict ruling, defying what is known from other priestly laws,⁶⁶ formulated the missing example necessary to complete the symmetry—an animal permitted for consumption but ritually defiling by contact (Table 2, category B-1).⁶⁷

Already with the juxtaposition of P_2 and P_1 , a distinction was made between impure animals whose carcasses may be touched at will and impure animals whose carcasses should not be touched. According to the text at this stage ($P_1 + P_2$) there was no reason to prohibit physical contact with the carcass of a ritually pure animal. However, an interpolator, perhaps the very same author of P_3 ,⁶⁸ formulated a counterintuitive law, prohibiting physical contact with the carcasses of water animals that are prohibited for consumption, although they are considered ritually pure (Table 3, category A-2). With the interpolation of this injunction, the legislator elegantly achieved complete symmetry pertaining to contact as well as consumption, as illustrated in the following diagram:

⁶⁶ See above, n. 43.

⁶⁷ The accepted law in P , according to which consumption of נבלה is permitted though ritually contaminating, is no innovation of P_3 and would have sufficed to complete the symmetry demonstrated in Table 3. However, the symmetrical distribution of the elements in the following diagram is attained—incidentally or intentionally—by the stringent legislation, according to which the נבלה communicates impurity not only by consumption but also through contact.

⁶⁸ The same tendencies towards exceptional stringency and attainment of symmetry are found both in vv. 39–40 and in vv. 10–11; however, one need not suppose that P_1 inserted vv. 10–11. The interpolator of vv. 10–11 refers to the consumption of prohibited water animals as eating “from their flesh” (מבשרם, 11bα), whereas P_3 speaks of the consumption of permitted quadrupeds as eating “from its carcass” (מנבלתה, 40αα); see above, n. 54.



Legend:

- A four exceptional quadrupeds (camel, hyrax, hare, pig)
- B aquatic animals lacking fins and/or scales
- C eight types of land-swarmer; most quadrupeds (non-ruminants lacking split hoofs)
- D twenty types of birds; all but four types of flying insects; all but eight types of land-swarmer
- E carcass (נבלה) of ruminant artiodactyla (e.g., cow not properly killed)
- F artiodactyla (with the exception of the pig) properly killed; all but twenty types of birds; four types of locust; fish with scales and fins

■ Reconstructing the Logical Process

The position of P in two instances discussed so far—the flesh of the נבלה and that of certain animal species—is that the status of an animal as pure or impure does not determine its status as prohibited or permitted (for contact or for consumption). However, the logical process of arriving at this position is not identical in both cases: in the case of an animal that died of itself, P adheres to an ancient law⁶⁹

⁶⁹ The fact that Exod 21:29 specifically prohibits the consumption of the flesh of a bull stoned to death suggests that this ancient law assumes that animals do not normally have to be slaughtered in a particular manner in order to be eaten; it is likely that these legislators permitted the consumption of an animal that died of itself. The laws of P and H, like the Book of the Covenant, do not acknowledge a possibility of non-sacral killing of cattle for food. Therefore, they assume that if mutton or beef are eaten outside the sacrificial system, it is usually because the animal died a natural death. The law in D, permitting non-sacral killing of cattle for food, demanded that in such cases, too, the

which considered the *נבלה* impure, but prohibited only the holy—that is, the priests—to eat from its flesh. The innovators in this case were E (Exod 22:30) and D (Deut 14:21), who—viewing all Israelites as holy—extended the scope of the prohibition accordingly.⁷⁰

In the case of the animal categorization systems, the process was apparently complex: in the Vorlage, the term *טמא* may simply have been a fossilized term referring to species prohibited for consumption. P rejected the traditional terminology and asserted that a distinction should be made between species that are ritually defiling and species that are prohibited for consumption, though ritually pure. D and H, on the other hand, accepted the traditional terminology, emphasizing that it is unbecoming to a holy nation (D) or to a nation continually sanctified by YHWH (H)⁷¹ to eat of the “impure” species.⁷²

It is unclear whether the Vorlage or Deuteronomy 14 considered the “impure” water animals, birds and flying insects to be ritually defiling (in which case P would be rejecting the traditional practice as well as the traditional terminology). The question as such may simply not have arisen for the legislators responsible for these texts, who did not formulate their thoughts in terms of a complex system of ritual contamination and stages of purification, but commanded rather generally, in the cases of the “impure” quadrupeds—“you shall not touch their carcasses” (*וּבְנִבְלָתָם לֹא תִנּוּעוּ*, Deut 14:8). However, there is reason to hypothesize that the terms *טהור* and *טמא* served in these legal codes as mere labels indicating “permitted for consumption” and “prohibited for consumption” respectively, and did not indicate ritual purity or impurity.

animal be slaughtered (Deut 12:15–21), so that its blood may be drained; the legislators probably expected game to be slaughtered when captured alive, or drained of its blood after its death; see Schwartz, *The Holiness Legislation*, 121–23.

⁷⁰ This does not mean that the formulation of these laws in E and in D postdates that of the laws of the *נבלה* in Leviticus. However, the wording of the rationale for prohibiting the consumption of the *טמא* and *נבלה* in E (Exod 22:30a) and in D (Deut 14:21aβ) respectively suggests that the impurity of such flesh preceded its prohibition logically and chronologically. Both legislators presuppose that the holy may not consume impure flesh; and since both require of the Israelites what is normally expected only of the holy (e.g., the priests), they prohibit all Israelites to consume such flesh. On the other hand, the wording of P suggests that the legislator assumed the *נבלה* to be permitted, since P does not find it necessary to explicitly permit it, but only provides the instructions for purification from eating it (Lev 11:30a). Furthermore, several other laws in priestly literature suggest that the permission for Israelites to eat the flesh of an animal that died of itself is not an innovation but a presupposition (7:24; 17:15; 22:8).

⁷¹ See above, n. 28.

⁷² Another case which deserves a separate study is that of the menstruant in P. If one assumes that P permitted sexual relations with the (impure) menstruant, then this permission is presented not as an innovation but as a given fact (Lev 15:24). If P did not permit sexual relations with the menstruant but only chose to discuss her impurity independently of the prohibitions stemming from it, then P seems to be driving at a logical distinction between impurity and prohibition. If so, P might be considered innovative in this case as well (vis-à-vis the law preserved in H [Lev 18:19; 20:18] and apparently reflected in Ezekiel [22:10]). Regarding the many difficulties involved in solving this problem, see Milgrom, *Leviticus* 1:940–41.

The evidence for this last hypothesis is circumstantial. The terms *טָהוֹר* and *טָמֵא* are laden with positive and negative metaphoric meaning. That they *may* serve as labels to indicate permission or prohibition for consumption is evident from the fact that the Holiness Code, which, in the context of ritual impurity (Lev 22:5) admits that not all land-swarmers are ritually impure, still refers to all land-swarmers as *טָמֵא* in the context of food prohibitions (Lev 20:25, see also 11:43 [H]). Furthermore, even P, in a slip of the tongue, uses the phrase “pure (*טָהוֹרִים*) birds” (14:4), though according to P there is no such thing as a bird that is *not* ritually pure. This slip indicates that in the parlance of the time, with which the authors of P were naturally acquainted, the term *טָהוֹר* served as a label similar in meaning to “of which you may eat” (*אֲשֶׁר הִיא לָכֶם לֶאֱכֹלָה*, Lev 11:39).⁷³

■ Conclusion: Sagacious Savages

Thus far we have distinguished between a popular, relatively simple system of categorization that appears to have been prevalent in ancient Israel and is widely attested in pentateuchal literature and an alternative, relatively complex system, found in P. Textual analysis provides unequivocal evidence that the latter system presupposes the former, and was devised to replace it. Internal analysis of Leviticus 11 suggests that the Priestly system itself is the product of a gradual process, in which each textual stratum appears to be a conscious reaction and response to its predecessors.

Lévi-Strauss's theory has been instrumental in elucidating these ancient Israelite classification systems in several ways. Methodologically, we have followed Lévi-Strauss in approaching the classification systems from a purely formal point of view. We have not inquired why a particular species came to be regarded as impure whereas another was considered pure, but have centered instead on the structural categories that constitute the system of classification, and on the relations between them.

This approach, though it takes us a step further away from the concrete objects that are subject to classification, is practically essential in the case of ancient Israelite society, where one lacks firsthand evidence of any symbolic or other meaning that may have been attributed to the species referred to in the texts, even in those cases where the species are identifiable. The vast variety of interpretations of the meaning of the classification systems in Deuteronomy and Leviticus is in itself evidence of how precarious such guesswork can be at times.⁷⁴ The interpretation offered here

⁷³ The use of the terms *טָמֵא* and *טָהוֹר* as such labels is found in Lev 27:11, 27, Num 18:15, referring to live animals. However, the argument cannot be proved from these verses, since the use of the label *טָמֵא* would not be a mistake in the system of P, since the “impure” animals really are, in a sense, more (ritually) impure than the “pure” animals. Firstly, an “impure” animal is always ritually defiling after death, regardless of how it is killed. Secondly, in P (with the exception of P₃) the impurity of the carcass of “impure” animals is graver than that of “pure” animals.

⁷⁴ For a short survey and classification of some of these interpretations see Houston, *Purity*, 123–68. Note that many structuralist interpretations, beginning with Mary Douglas's *Purity and*

avoids these stumbling blocks since it obviates the necessity to identify the species and to guess what their symbolic value may have been. In Lévi-Strauss's terms, the same system could have been inverted, with all pure animals designated as impure and all impure animals designated as pure, and it would still convey the same message;⁷⁵ for it is not the species themselves, to use Lévi-Strauss's terminology once again, but the differences between the species that are of interest.⁷⁶

Furthermore, it has been possible to demonstrate, particularly in the case of Leviticus 11, that the formulation of the ritual taxonomy was not motivated merely by materialistic considerations, but rather testifies to a consistent mental operation, carried through in a series of binary oppositions: pure // impure; prohibited // permitted; external contact // internal ingestion.

Most importantly, it appears that Lévi-Strauss's theory, despite its faults, has predicted quite accurately what the contents of a message "encoded" in a classification system might be: a coherent argument regarding the relation between culture and nature. As we have seen in the case of Leviticus 11, this argument is not expressed by means of abstract terminology. Instead, it is presented through a complex ritual grid that can be likened to a logical formula in which animal species serve as variables, and ritual categories serve as logical operators.

This brings us to the question of the applicability of Lévi-Strauss's theory to the Biblical texts examined here. In *The Savage Mind*, Lévi-Strauss's methodology appears, at times, to be etic in the extreme⁷⁷: the anthropologist encounters complex systems practiced among preliterate societies, and regards them as an encoded message which the practitioners themselves may never have been conscious of, though they may have somehow divined the message intuitively. The interpretations of the practitioners themselves are often irrelevant, or even obstructive, to the understanding of these "encoded" messages.⁷⁸ This is particularly evident from the analogy to deciphering the grammar of a language, an analogy that Lévi-Strauss often invokes.⁷⁹ This attitude, however, is hardly commensurable with another general tendency of Lévi-Strauss's writings, to portray the preliterate societies, with unconcealed admiration towards the veritable complexity of some of their ritual systems, as "savage philosophers," employing a complex logic in no way inferior to that current in societies that are technologically more highly advanced.⁸⁰

Danger, attempt to explain why particular species are categorized as impure whereas others are categorized as pure. This question is distinct from the question we have addressed here.

⁷⁵ *The Savage Mind*, 102–3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁷⁷ But cf. *idem*, "Structuralism and Ecology," *Social Science Information* 12 (1972) 20–23.

⁷⁸ For examples, see *The Savage Mind*, 115–17.

⁷⁹ See Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology" in *Structural Anthropology* (trans. B. G. Schoepf; New York: Basic Books, 1963) 31–54; *The Savage Mind*, 18–19, 102, 131, 158–60; and esp. 223.

⁸⁰ *The Savage Mind*, 35–75 (*passim*), 153, 251–52, 267–68. In some cases, Lévi-Strauss asserts that the logical edifice is consciously acknowledged in the society where it is found (9–10) or, at least,

In the concluding chapter of *The Savage Mind*, Lévi-Strauss suggests a solution to this problem, though not without some uneasiness: the complex and rigid logic current among preliterate societies is often expressed, he suggests, not “spontaneously and forcefully in the *praxis* of groups” (i.e., like the unconsciously internalized grammar of a spoken language) but in “the conscious and deliberate rules by which these same groups—or their philosophers—spend their time in codifying and controlling it.”⁸¹

Despite the belated and half-hearted nature of this recantation, and its adverse effect on his theory as a whole,⁸² it is worth considering at least for methodological purposes, when applying Lévi-Strauss’s insights to the Biblical texts. We have already suggested that the systems preserved in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are not of the same nature. Though both systems have been preserved in a textual form, I have suggested that the system described in Deuteronomy 14 is to a certain extent descriptive, i.e., it records what was probably common practice in ancient Israelite society. It is quite possible that this system encodes an (unconscious) underlying belief that cultural and natural categories are congruous and mutually dependent. However, here one is on precarious footing, as I have noted.⁸³

In the case of Leviticus 11, on the other hand, one is on relatively solid ground. The text of Leviticus displays a conscious, gradual, consistent differentiation of the categories “impurity” and “prohibition,” presented not in abstract terms but through a grid of ritual regulations. The system does not reveal an underlying “grammar” which the practitioners were unaware of, but—to the contrary—it is in itself a formulation of such a “grammar,” to be thought out rather than acted out.

that their interpretation of their own *praxis* corresponds with that of the anthropologist (57).

⁸¹ Ibid., 251–52. The concession, “or their philosophers,” gives the theory an unexpected twist; cf. 263–64.

⁸² The fact remains that the vast majority of the examples quoted in *Totemism* and in *The Savage Mind* are of practices performed by preliterate societies, without their conscious awareness of the contents of a message which their practices encode. In a number of instances, their own interpretation actually excludes the possibility of such awareness (e.g., 115–16). However, Lévi-Strauss does offer at least one clear example of a scheme which is more theoretical than practical (the Yoruba sexual taboos, *The Savage Mind*, 132–33).

⁸³ Above, p. 212.

Fragments from the Cartonnage of P⁷⁵

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In November 1985, the British Museum turned over to me photographs in their files that they had made while conserving the leather binding of P⁷⁵ for the Bibliothèque Bodmer, which contained fragments of Luke and John not previously published in the *editio princeps* or otherwise available to scholarship. This article reports on these fragments and includes three plates of the photographs.

I first completed this essay on 15 October 2005, then revised it on 20 January 2006, and again on 25 April 2006 for publication in the *Harvard Theological Review*, and again on 24 April 2007; I gave it in its present form to *HTR* on 28 November 2007. These delays, of course, call for some explanation.

While in Tokyo at a conference of the Japan Bible Society in May 2006, I met Klaus Wachtel of the Münster Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung. He told me that a colleague of his there, Marie-Luise Lakmann, was publishing for the Bibliothèque Bodmer an edition of the fragments from the cartonnage of P⁷⁵. I had given the Münster Institute's founders, Kurt and Barbara Aland, the ultraviolet photographs of the fragments from the cartonnage on which she has largely based her essay. Hence I delayed publication of my essay until her detailed text-critical analysis had appeared. I contacted her, and she responded on 19 July 2006 that she had submitted her article in January 2006 to Mme Métry of the Bodmeriana and had "used the photographs you passed on to our Institute." Her essay does in fact acknowledge dependence on them although without explaining how she obtained access to them:

Die neuen Fragmente ergänzen weitere Lücken des Textes. Sie stammen überwiegend aus den ersten und letzten erhaltenen Blättern des Kodex, die zur Stabilisierung des Einbandes zusammengeklebt waren, in den 80er Jahren jedoch im British Museum teilweise voneinander gelöst werden konnten. Sichtbar wurden dadurch einige bisher unbekannte Textstücke, andere Textpassagen können nun in grösserer Klarheit und Vollständigkeit gelesen werden. . . .

Teile dieses "Einbandes" konnten im British Museum Mitte der achtziger Jahre gelöst und mittels Infrarottechnik photographiert werden, . . .

Diese Seite des Papyrus [John 12:47–13:10] ist an einigen Stellen mit Klebstoffspuren überzogen; darunterliegende Buchstabenreste sind zum Teil jedoch auf den Infrarotphotos, die bei der Restaurierung dieser Blätter im British Museum erstellt worden sind, zu sehen.¹

The new fragments supplement further lacunae of the text. They come primarily from the first and last surviving leaves of the codex, which were pasted together to stabilize the binding, but in the '80s could nonetheless be partially separated from one another in the British Museum. Thus a few previously unknown bits of text became visible, other passages of text can now be read with greater clarity and completeness. . . .

Parts of this "binding" could be separated in the British Museum in the middle of the '80s and photographed with the help of infrared technology. . . .

This side of the papyrus [John 12:47–13:13] is in a few places covered with traces of paste; nonetheless vestiges of letters lying beneath can be partially seen in the infrared photos that have been produced in the British Museum during the restoration of these leaves.

Yet, in an opening footnote, Lakmann indicates that she publishes not the photographs of the British Museum on file in Münster but those of the Bibliothèque Bodmer in Cologny near Geneva:

Mein herzlicher Dank gilt der Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Genève/Cologny, für ihre freundliche Aufnahme und Unterstützung sowie die Bereitstellung der beigefügten Photos.²

My hearty thanks are due to the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana of Geneva/Cologny for its amicable acceptance and support, as well as for providing the appended photos.

These photographs of the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana do not comprise the same infrared photographs of the British Museum that Lakmann used in preparing her excellent text-critical essay, which for this very reason proves so remarkable and useful. But rather the older photographs of Bibliotheca Bodmeriana appear so inadequate that other textual critics cannot use them to verify her readings. We cannot read the fragment of Luke 3:21–22 on her Plate Ib³ nor the much too enlarged verso with Luke 4:1–2 on Plate II;⁴ yet Lakmann has transcribed both correctly.⁵ The fragment at the bottom to the right in the top half of Plate III,⁶ containing some of Luke 5:37–39, appears printed upside down, although the ink appears too obscure

¹ Marie-Luise Lakmann, "Papyrus Bodmer XIV–XV (P⁷⁵) Neue Fragmente," *Museum Helveticum* 64 (2007) 22–41, at 22–24, 30.

² *Ibid.*, 22.

³ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

to make this visible; yet Lakmann has transcribed it correctly.⁷ The photograph of John 12:47–13:10 on plate VIII appears less legible than the infrared photograph.⁸ The cropping off of the bottom margin included the last line (line 41); yet Lakmann included it in her transcription.⁹ The photograph of John 14:26–15:10 on plate X, taken before the British Museum had removed vestiges of the leather cover and the paste used in making the cartonnage,¹⁰ appears completely illegible; yet Lakmann has produced a largely complete transcription.¹¹ Obviously her transcriptions come from the infrared photograph of the British Museum. Since Lakmann does not state in her essay how she got access to the infrared photographs, a reader seeking to verify her transcriptions would naturally turn to the British Museum (now the British Library) only to find that it no longer has the infrared photographs (since they gave them to me in November, 1985). Since the Bibliothèque Bodmer did not provide the photographs of the British Museum for Lakmann's essay, we do not know whether the Bibliothèque Bodmer has copies of these photographs, and, if so, how other textual critics could get access to them. Hence I include three plates of British Museum photographs in the present essay, so that interested textual critics can have access to the best extant photographs.

Luke 3:21–22; 4:1–2; 5:37–39; 6:11–12 (pages 221–22).

John 12:47–13:10 (page 223).

John 14:26–15:10 (page 224).

Lakmann received a reply from the Bodmeriana in February, 2006, that the *Museum Helveticum* was “ravie de publier dans les meilleurs délais votre contribution,” (“delighted to publish with the briefest delay your contribution”). But the *Museum Helveticum* reported in July 2006 that it had not yet received the essay from the Bibliothèque Bodmer! An inquiry at the Bodmeriana led to a response in September, 2006, that they had assigned to Rodolphe Kasser and his wife, Anna DiBitonto Kasser, the publication of such unpublished tiny bits of papyrus. As a matter of fact, Kasser had announced his assignment in the *Newsletter* of the International Association for Coptic Studies in October, 2002, as follows:

Édition de divers petits fragments de papyrus ou parchemin se rattachant à des manuscrits (coptes ou grecs) déjà publiés dans la collection M. Bodmer, Fondation Martin Bodmer.¹²

⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁸ Ibid., 39.

⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹¹ Ibid., 32–33.

¹² Published in Münster once, twice, or three times a year, the *Newsletter* includes a listing submitted by authors of their articles soon to be or just published. Number 44 of October 2002 listed Kasser's entry.

The edition of various small fragments of papyrus or parchment attached to manuscripts (Coptic or Greek) already published in the collection M. Bodmer, Fondation Martin Bodmer.

This announcement appeared again and again—in September, 2005 (Number 48), July, 2006 (Number 49), and July, 2007 (Number 50)—during which time Kasser remained engrossed full-time in editing *The Gospel of Judas*.¹³ The Bodmeriana submitted Lakmann's essay to the *Museum Helveticum* and authorized the publication of the present essay.

Actually, Lakmann's essay did not appear until 2007 after the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana had acquired P⁷⁵ on 22 November 2006 (as acknowledged in Lakmann's essay).¹⁴ This too calls for some explanation.

The Vatican Library announced the acquisition of P⁷⁵ in its newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* on 24 January 2007, just two days after its acquisition, in a lengthy article written by one of the Vatican's librarians, Sever J. Voicu.¹⁵ *The Birmingham News* detailed the actual acquisition procedure on 2 March 2007 in an article written by the person most involved in its acquisition, Father Richard Donohoe of St. Paul's Cathedral in Birmingham, Alabama. I had interviewed him on the phone prior to the publication of the article and then in person on 10 March 2007. The article includes a picture of Father Donohoe with the Pope at the presentation ceremony. It actually appears under the name of the staff writer Greg Garrison, as follows:

Donohoe assisted in the Vatican Library's acquisition of two rare pieces of papyrus, including the oldest surviving copy of the Gospel of Luke and one of the two oldest copies of the Gospel of John. . . .

The papyri were bought through Christie's of New York after the auction house announced that the Bodmer Library in Switzerland was putting them up for sale.

Donohoe got involved in late 2005 when former St. Paul's member Amy McCreedy, an employee of Christie's, told him the artifacts would be coming up for sale and asked if the Vatican would be interested.

Donohoe contacted Gary Krupp of the Pave the Way Foundation, who had previously worked with the Vatican Library. The Vatican expressed interest. In February, Donohoe was asked by the Vatican to raise funds for the purchase. The fundraising and the negotiations during 2006 were kept secret.

With Krupp's help, Donohoe contacted Catholic businessman Frank Hanna III of Atlanta, whose foundation put up the money to purchase the ancient documents and donate them to the Vatican for safekeeping and research. No sale price was announced although it was obviously in the millions. . . .

¹³ The preliminary edition of *The Gospel of Judas* was listed in the *Newsletter* only after it was published, in Number 49 of July 2006, whereas the definitive edition published in 2007 has not been listed at all.

¹⁴ Lakmann, "Papyrus Bodmer," n. 1.

¹⁵ Sever J. Voicu, *L'Osservatore Romano* on 24 January 2007, 5.

On Jan 22, Donohoe, Krupp and the Hanna family took part in a ceremony at the Vatican to present the papyri to the pope. . . .

The stunning Vatican acquisition caught the attention of one of the top scholars of ancient biblical documents, James M. Robinson, who this semester is serving as eminent professor of religion at Auburn University.

"It is probably the most important New Testament biblical manuscript to have survived," said Robinson, general editor of *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*.¹⁶

This then brings us to the present article, which in all innocence I had prepared fully ignorant of all these other proceedings!

℘⁷⁵, an early third-century codex, consists of Bodmer Papyrus XIV¹⁷ and Bodmer Papyrus XV¹⁸ and contains large portions of the gospels of Luke and John published in 1961. In the summer of 1972 Kurt Aland and his text-critical team visited the Bibliothèque Bodmer to photograph both the papyri and the unplaced fragments, a number of which they identified and published in 1976.¹⁹ The present essay supplements Aland's list with other fragments not available at that time, since they had been pasted together in parts of the cartonnage of the leather cover of the codex containing ℘⁷⁵.

■ The Pachomian Monastic Library

I came upon photographs of these fragments from the cartonnage of ℘⁷⁵ quite by chance. The British Museum entrusted the photographs to me to make them available to the scholarly community. Thus I feel morally obligated to pass them on to textual critics of the New Testament as fully as possible.

I came upon the fragments in the following way. I had received permission from the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin to publish (in 1990) a papyrus (Chester Beatty Codex Accession 1390) containing a segment from the Gospel of John (10:7–13:38) in Subachmimic. I had developed an interest in this papyrus upon determining that it constituted part of a manuscript discovery, whose provenance I had stumbled upon in tracing back the Nag Hammadi Codices to their place of discovery in Upper Egypt.

The locals in Upper Egypt know this second manuscript discovery as the "Dishna papers," named for the town where they had traded them. The discovery occurred near the headquarters monastery of the Pachomian order, or, more precisely,

¹⁶ Greg Garrison, *The Birmingham News*, 2 March 2007 (Father Richard Donohoe, St. Paul's Cathedral, Birmingham, Ala.).

¹⁷ *Évangile de Luc, chap. 3–24*. (pub. Victor Martin and Rodolphe Kasser; Papyrus Bodmer 14; Cologny-Geneva: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1961).

¹⁸ *Évangile de Jean, chap. 1–15* (pub. Victor Martin and Rodolphe Kasser; Papyrus Bodmer 15; Cologny-Geneva: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1961).

¹⁹ Kurt Aland, "Neue Testamentliche Papyri III," "3. Neue Fragmente zu ℘⁷⁵," *New Testament Studies* 22 (1976) 375–96; 375–81.

between it and the cliffs (i.e., about where they would have buried the monks [and manuscripts]).

The Dishna papers represented the remnants of the library of the headquarters monastery of the Pachomian order, which they had buried a couple of centuries after Pachomius had created a chain of monasteries along the Nile in the fourth century. When Athanasius had to flee for refuge from Alexandria, rumor had it that he had gone in hiding in the Pachomian monasteries.²⁰ He might have taken some of the patriarchate's library holdings with him for his own personal use and perhaps to save them from falling into the hands of heretics. This could explain how P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵ (both about a century older than the founding of the Pachomian order itself) ended up buried for safekeeping as part of the Pachomian monastic library.²¹

I learned at the Chester Beatty Library that the British Museum conserved their papyri for them and, in the conservation work, made photographs, which might prove useful in the process of editing Chester Beatty Codex Accession 1390. I went in November 1985 to the British Museum, and they provided photographs of several Chester Beatty manuscripts that I thought came from the Pachomian monastic library.

The time of my visit turned out propitious. For the conservator of papyrus had just retired, and they needed to clean his office of his materials. On seeing my interest in New Testament manuscripts, the Museum entrusted me to make available to the academic community other photographs of a similar nature. These photographs included those of the fragments from the cartonnage of P⁷⁵ that had stuck to fragments of the leather cover. They had become separated when sent by the Bibliothèque Bodmer to the British Museum for this purpose.

The monks had rebound this papyrus codex, as part of the Pachomian monastic library, in late antiquity. In the rebinding process, they had pasted broken papyrus fragments of Luke and John inside the leather covers to stiffen them and thus created the cartonnage conserved at the British Museum.

²⁰ *The Life of Pachomius: Vita Prima Graeca* (trans. Apostolos N. Athanassakis; intro. Birger A. Pearson; Society of Biblical Literature, Texts and Translations 7; Early Christian Literature Series 2; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1975). Ch. 137 reports on an Arian general Artemius searching unsuccessfully for Athanasius in the monastery of Tabennesis, and chs. 143–44 report Athanasius's visit to the Pachomian monasteries.

²¹ James M. Robinson, "The Discovering and Marketing of Coptic Manuscripts: The Nag Hammadi Codices and the Bodmer Papyri," in *Sundries in Honour of Torgny Säve-Söderbergh*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Boreas: *Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations* 13 (1984) 97–114; reprinted in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (ed. Birger A. Pearson and James Goehring; Studies in Antiquity and Christianity; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 1–25. Further: James M. Robinson, *The Pachomian Monastic Library at the Chester Beatty Library and the Bibliothèque Bodmer* (Occasional Papers 19; Claremont, Calif.: The Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, 1990); repr. with supplement in *The Role of the Book in the Civilisations of the Near East, Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (1990–1991 [1993]) 26–40. Further: my introduction to *The Chester Beatty Codex Ac 1390: Mathematical School Exercises in Greek and John 10:7–13:38 in Subachmimic* (ed. William Brashear, Wolf-Peter Funk, James M. Robinson, and Richard Smith; Chester Beatty Monographs 13; Leuven and Paris: Peeters, 1990 [1991]) 3–32.

Cartonnage usually consisted of trash paper such as documentary papyri of no value. They do not normally use fragments from the literary texts of the codex itself for this purpose. By the time the dwindling Pachomian monastic order buried its library, the monks must have no longer read Greek. For them, the broken fragments did not represent texts to read, but just part of a venerated relic from the monastery's beginnings that they wanted to preserve.

The infrared photographs given to me by the British Museum contained two almost complete leaves reassembled from fragments as well as some pictures of their individual fragments and of their partially assembled leaves:

John 12:33–47, and its other side, John 12:47–13:10;

John 14:8–26, and its other side, John 14:26–15:10.

We have also photographs of both sides of two small fragments:

Luke 3:21–22 and Luke 6:11–12, and, on the other side, Luke 4:1–2 and Luke 5:37–39, respectively.

On 5 November 1985, I wrote letters to Bruce Metzger and Matthew Black, chairs of the American and British committees of the International Greek New Testament Project primarily responsible for the United Bible Societies' *The Greek New Testament*, and to Kurt and Barbara Aland, chairs of the committee of the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster responsible for the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, and enclosed to each copies of the photographs that the British Museum had given to me.

The Alands replied with appreciation on 9 December 1985 and reported that, from a preliminary analysis, the material I had sent fell into four categories: 1) the text and photographs about which they already knew, but had inaccurately placed; 2) a transcription that they already had available, but without photographs; 3) additions to these transcriptions that they could make; 4) some completely unknown pieces: John 13:1–8; 14:30–15:6; 15:9–10.

Metzger and Black, although not acknowledging receipt of my mailing, did incorporate material from it in the fourth revised edition of *The Greek New Testament*, to judge by the fifth printing, which includes papyri 98–116, in its unaltered sixth printing of 2002.

The *editiones principes* had already published facsimiles of the individual pages, which included some of the material subsequently sent to the British Museum for conservation. But they did not deem all the material suitable for publication as facsimiles, since it remained covered by vestiges of the leather of the cover. Indeed a few pieces remained stuck together and needed the work of conservation professionals to separate them in order to become accessible.

Novum Testamentum Graece

I cite the relevant policies of Nestle-Aland regarding papyri of the New Testament as follows:

The *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁶ states:

Im kritischen Apparat sind die Lesarten neu bekanntgewordener Papyri und Majuskeln verzeichnet.²²

In the critical apparatus are listed the readings of papyri and majuscules that have newly become known.

Then they list the verses that have at least a letter in a given verse for each manuscript.²³ For \mathfrak{P}^{75} the list includes the following: for Luke “3:18–22; 3:33–4,2; 4:34–5,10; 5:37–6:4; 6:10–7:32”; and for John “12:3–13:1, 8–9; 14:8–30; 15:7–8.” This list includes some of the verses represented in the cartonnage (such as Luke 3:21–22; 4:1–2; 5:37–39; 6:11–12; and John 12:33–13:1, 8–9; 14:8–30; 15:7–8) because the *editiones principes* had already published part of the verses in question, or the Aland team had photographed and/or transcribed them. But other verses represented in the cartonnage do not appear on this list (John 13:2–7, 10; 14:31–15:6, 9–10), which indicates that these fragments from the cartonnage had not yet become accessible.

The *Greek-English New Testament* states:

This eighth edition differs basically from its predecessors in the Greek part, which now represents the 27th edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*. The Greek text remains unchanged from that of the 26th edition, which is also that of the Fourth (and Third) edition of the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament, but significant changes have been made in the critical apparatus.²⁴

Then, in the Introduction, it states further:

New fragments of \mathfrak{P}^{41} , \mathfrak{P}^{66} and \mathfrak{P}^{75} have been incorporated as well as the readings of \mathfrak{P}^{90} , \mathfrak{P}^{91} , and \mathfrak{P}^{93-116} , here reported for the first time.²⁵

This edition has enlarged the list of verses in \mathfrak{P}^{75} : John “12,3–13,10; 14,8–15,10.”²⁶ Thus this new listing makes complete all of the verses accessible in the cartonnage.

Since the United Bible Societies’ *The Greek New Testament*⁴ lists in its *apparatus criticus* only a selection of what it considers the most significant variant readings, it does not list most of the new material in the cartonnage.

I now turn to this new material itself.

²² *Novum Testamentum Graece* (ed. Eberhard and Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland; 26th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979; rev. 1983; 8. Druck, 1985) unnumbered page just prior to the table of contents.

²³ *Ibid.*, 688.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; Nestle-Aland, *Greek-English New Testament* (9th rev. ed. 2001; includes papyri 98–116 and the reprinted Preface to the rev. 8th ed., 1994) vi.

²⁵ Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 5*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 688.

■ Luke 3:21–22 (Page 221)

Plate 1 of the *editio princeps* of Luke, captioned “Luc III:18–22; VI:4,” contains two separate segments of a leaf, each attached to leather from the cover that still lies on top of much of this papyrus. The smaller of the segments has no legible papyrus visible but only leather. (Concerning the other small fragment without leather attached, from Luke 6:4, the verso from Luke 6:15, see below.) The larger segment (printed upside down) has some text barely visible on it in places where it has no leather from the cover to obscure it. The transcriptions of the *editio princeps* have the following captions at the tops of the pages 32–33: “Luc III:18–22 (couverture*),” (“Luke 3:18–22 [binding*],”) and “Luc III:33–IV:2 (couverture*),” (“Luke 3:33–4:2 [binding*]”), with the following footnote at the bottom of page 32 to explain the asterisks: “* Feuilletés utilisés pour la confection de la reliure, v. intr. pp. 11–13,” (“Leaves used in making the binding, see the introduction, pages 11–13”). At the bottom of page 33, we read the following footnote: “* Cette page d’un feuillet utilisé pour la confection de la reliure (v. intr. pp. 5, 9 et 11–13), n’a pu être photographiée” (“* This page of a leaf used in making the binding [see the introduction, pages 5, 9, and 11–13] could not be photographed”).²⁷

The introduction in the first volume, which contains Luke 3–24, reads as follows:

Nous donnons avec la transcription du Papyrus Bodmer XIV–XV un facsimilé de toutes les pages de ce document, à l’exception de celles qui sont collées les unes aux autres, dans la reliure du codex. En effet, l’extrême fragilité du papyrus nous a obligés à remettre immédiatement en place les couches que nous avons pu séparer pour le déchiffrement. A l’exception de ces quelques pages, le lecteur disposera donc de l’image complète du texte original. . . .

L’observateur attentif remarquera également de très légères irrégularités dans l’assemblage des fragments. Il n’a pas été possible d’obtenir une plus grande précision, car chaque déplacement des fragments pouvait provoquer de nouvelles détériorations, et, par conséquent, une perte de texte. Il fallut se résoudre à limiter le nombre des manipulations dans l’intérêt même de l’édition.²⁸

We give with the transcription of Bodmer Papyrus XIV–XV a facsimile of all the pages of this document, with the exception of those that are pasted one on the other in the binding of the codex. In effect, the extreme fragility of the papyrus has obliged us to restore immediately in place the layers that we had been able to separate for the decipherment. Hence, with the exception of these few pages, the reader will have available the complete image of the original text. . . .

The attentive reader will also note very slight irregularities in the assembling of the fragments. It has not been possible to obtain greater precision, for each displacement of the fragments could provoke new

²⁷ *Évangile de Luc*, 32–33.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

deteriorations, and, as a result, a loss of text. It was necessary to resolve to limit the number of manipulations precisely in the interest of the edition.

We see the following further clarification on page 9:

L'identification des fragments et leur mise en place a permis de reconstituer plus ou moins complètement 21 nouveaux feuillets, auxquels il faut en ajouter 5 provenant de la reliure.²⁹

The identification of fragments and their placement has made it possible to reconstitute more or less completely 21 new leaves, to which it is necessary to add five coming from the binding.

More details appear on pages 11 and 13 (separated by a chart on page 12):

Nous rappelons que les feuilles constituant le cahier sont superposées dans l'ordre de 1 à 36, verso en dessous, et que les restes de celles qui portent les n^{os} 7, 9 et 11 de la série ont été utilisés dans la reliure et récupérés par désintégration partielle de celle-ci. Collées primitivement les unes aux autres, elles adhéraient étroitement à des fragments de cuir appartenant de toute évidence à la reliure du codex ou, plus exactement, aux deux plats de cette reliure. Toutefois, à en juger par son épaisseur, cet agglomérat ne pouvait guère comprendre plus de quatre couches de papyrus au maximum. C'est bien, du reste, ce qu'a confirmé la séparation des couches, dans la mesure où il a été possible de l'opérer. Cette opération a procuré des parties des feuillets 7, 9 et 11.³⁰

We recall that the leaves constituting the quire are placed one on another in the order 1 to 36, verso below, and that the vestiges of those that carry the numbers 7, 9, and 11 of the series have been used in the binding and recovered by its partial disintegration. Pasted originally one on another, they adhere directly to the fragments of leather belonging in all probability to the binding of the codex, or, more exactly, to the two sides of this binding. Nonetheless, to judge by its thickness, this conglomerate could at most have hardly contained more than four thicknesses of papyrus. This is, besides, what has been confirmed by the separation of the layers, to the extent that it has been possible to carry it out. This operation has procured parts of leaves 7, 9, and 11.

The chart on page 12 identifies these leaves. Sheet 7* consisted of one leaf containing Luke 3:18–22 / 3:33–4:2 but missing the conjugate leaf. Sheet 9* consisted of a leaf containing Luke 4:34–42 / 4:43–5:10 with a conjugate leaf containing John 14:8–26 / 14:26–15:8. Sheet 11* consisted of a leaf containing Luke 5:37–6:4 / 6:10–15 with a conjugate leaf containing John 12:33–47 / 12:47–13:10. A footnote explains the asterisk: “* marque les folios récupérés dans la couverture,” (“* indicates the folios recovered in the binding”).³¹

²⁹ Ibid., 9.

³⁰ Ibid., 11 and 13.

³¹ Ibid., 12.

The transcription of the *editio princeps* includes those parts of the cartonnage not covered by leather.

The *apparatus criticus* both of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷ and *The Greek New Testament*⁴ contain no new variant at this text.

■ Luke 4:1–2 (Page 222)

One might expect the other side of the leaf visible on Plate 1 to show up on Plate 2. But this does not occur. Whereas the larger segment on Plate 1 appears in fact upside down, the larger segment in Plate 2, although not rotated, appears right side up. Clearly, one does not have to do with the front and back of the same leaf. Also the texts themselves make this clear. Whereas Luke 3:18–22 shows up on one side of the larger segment, and Luke 6:10–14 appears on the other, these texts lie too far apart to represent the recto and verso of the same leaf. Hence Plate 1 shows a fragment of a page of one leaf, and Plate 2 has a fragment of a page of another leaf.

A photograph from the British Museum presents (right side up) the right part of the larger segment on Plate 1 (where the cartonnage appears) now separated off as a separate fragment from Luke 3:21–22 (page 221). Once they had separated this fragment from the leather of the cover and from the rest of the papyrus leaf shown on Plate 1, its other side became accessible. A photograph of the British Museum shows this other side of the fragment as part of Luke 4:1–2 (page 222). Once cleaned, one could transcribe part of it. As a result, one can now take out of square brackets some of the transcription on page 33 of the *editio princeps* that appears in square brackets in lines 11–13 from Luke 4:1–2.

In the *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷, we identify one new variant at this text. It agrees with the critical text in reading ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ.

In the *apparatus criticus* of *The Greek New Testament*⁴, one finds no new variant at this text.

■ Luke 5:37–39 (Page 221)

On Plate 2 the bottom left corner of the larger segment contains a fragment of Luke 6:11–12. Once the British Museum had removed this fragment, its other side became exposed. The photograph of the British Museum shows part of Luke 5:37–39 on this other side (page 221). The *editio princeps* does not have this side of the fragment.

The *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷ has three new variants at Luke 5:38–39, all omissions, based on the calculation of the length of the lines. At the end of Luke 5:38, Ɑ⁷⁵ “vid” omits (in agreement with the *editio princeps* and the critical text) καὶ ἀμφοτέροι συντηροῦνται. At Luke 5:39, Ɑ⁷⁵ “vid” omits καὶ against the critical text itself (which however has καὶ in square brackets, indicating “doubtful authenticity”). Hence, the *editio princeps* should have

omitted καὶ. P⁷⁵ “vid” also omits εὐθέως (in agreement with the *editio princeps* and the critical text).

In the *apparatus criticus* of *The Greek New Testament*⁴ at Luke 5:38, P⁷⁵ reads βλητέον “vid” in agreement with the *editio princeps* and the critical text. (This listing does not appear in the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷!)

■ Luke 6:4

One very small fragment on Plate 1 of the *editio princeps* appears separate to itself and free of leather. A bottom margin also appears. One can read very few letters from Luke 6:4. One can see a text from Luke 6 visible on Plate 1, although it primarily displays text from Luke 3, because the larger segment visible on Plate 1 contains fragments of two leaves attached together and to the leather of the cover, one on top of the other. The lower of these two leaves, with text from Luke 6, does not appear visible otherwise on Plate 1, since on the larger segment it remains hidden behind the fragment of Luke 3:18–22. But on Plate 2, of the *editio princeps* one can see text from Luke 6:11–14. There the other side of this very small fragment also becomes visible and contains a very few letters from Luke 6:15 (see below). But this very small fragment does not have a bit of a second leaf that would have material from Luke 3. As a result, the other side of the leaf with Luke 6:11–14 has become visible on Plate 1 and shows Luke 6:4.

Neither the *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷ nor *The Greek New Testament*⁴ has a new variant at this text.

■ Luke 6:11–12 (Page 222)

Plate 2 of the *editio princeps*, captioned “Luc VI:10–15,” comprises the other side of what we see on Plate 1. It contains two separate segments of a leaf, both of which remain attached to leather from the cover. The smaller of the two segments has only a very few letters visible, which the *editio princeps* seems not to have transcribed. A third, very small fragment (from Luke 6:15), without any leather visible behind it, comes from the last line of the page, to judge by the blank papyrus below the letters. It appears transcribed on page 39 of the *editio princeps*.

The *editio princeps* has a transcription, also on page 39, of the larger segment visible on Plate 2. The fragment in the right upper corner of the larger segment that remains still attached to the leather of the cover forms part of Luke 6:11–12. This fragment, separated at the British Museum from the rest of the larger segment, thereby exposes the other side (Luke 5:37–39, see above), and we have photographs of both sides (pages 221, 222).

The main fragment on the larger segment, from Luke 6:11–14, does not constitute the other side of the main fragment on the large segment on Plate 1, Luke 3:18–22 (see above). Instead, we see fragments of two leaves and of the leather from the cover stuck together. Since the British Museum apparently did not succeed in

separating these layers (to judge by the available photographs), the other side of each of the two larger fragments attached to each other and to the leather from the cover remains extant. Hence, text preceding or following Luke 6:11–14 and text preceding or following Luke 3:18–22 remains extant but for the time being inaccessible. One may hope that newer technology will some day enable us to read these fragments.

The *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷ lists a new variant for P^{75} : the reading καὶ . . . καὶ, in agreement with the critical text.

The *apparatus criticus* of *The Greek New Testament*⁴ has no new variant at this text.

■ John 12:33b–47

Plate 97 of the *editio princeps* of John, captioned “Jean XII:33–47,” contains much of a leaf reassembled from a number of fragments. The transcription has the following captions at the top of the pages: “Jean XII:33–40 (couverture),” (“John 12:33–40 [binding]”), and “Jean XII:40–47 (couverture),” (“John 12:40–47 [binding]”).³² We see a strip of leather from the cover stuck on top of the right margin of the page from top to bottom. Fortunately, it does not cover any of the text. A photograph from the British Museum of the bulk of this page shows the same fragments as in the *editio princeps*, but the leather from the top half of the right margin, largely removed, leaves blackened papyrus in its place. The photograph lacks completely the leather in the bottom half of the right margin. Someone has removed it along with whatever papyrus lay behind it.

The *apparatus criticus* of both the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷ and the *Greek New Testament*⁴ has no new variants.

■ John 12:47–13:10 (Page 223)

Plate 98 of the *editio princeps* of John has the caption: “Jean XII:47–49; XIV:8–26.” It contains in the top right corner a small fragment with part of four lines from John 12:47–49, which comprises the top of a page with some top margin. It appears at the top of the leaf with John 14:8–26. Yet the *editio princeps* correctly transcribed this fragment as part of lines 1–5 of John 12:47–49.³³

This fragment of John 12:47–49 appears here on plate 98 (which basically shows John 14:8–26) because two leaves remained still attached in the cartonnage to each other and to part of the leather from the cover. But the top right fragment disappeared from the leaf on top, which showed John 14:8–26, and thus made visible this fragment of John 12:47–49, which belonged to the leaf below. In the cartonnage, the leaf with John 14:8–26 facing up must have lain below the leaf with John 12:47–13:10 facing up. Then, when they removed the leaf on top in

³² *Évangile de Jean*, 78–79.

³³ *Ibid.*, 80.

Geneva to conserve it, its top right fragment (from John 12:47–49) seems to have stayed attached to the cartonnage with John 14:8–26, which also had the leather of the cover still attached behind the left edge. This makes sense of Plate 98, where we find the fragment from John 12:47–49 on the page with the facsimile of John 14:8–26. Page 80 of the transcription, whose caption at the top of the page reads “Jean XII:47–XIII:10 (couverture*),” (“John 12:47–13:10 [binding]”), has a note at the bottom: “Cette page d’un feuillet utilisé pour la confection de la reliure (v. intr. pp. 5, 9 et 11–13) n’a pu être photographiée,” (“This page of a leaf used in making the binding [see the introduction, pages 5, 9, and 11–13] could not be photographed”). The transcription on page 80 does transcribe John 12:47–13:9 with the fragment in its correct place.

The leaf itself with John 12:47–13:10 consists of a number of fragments. The same strip of leather that we see more completely on Plate 97 appears on Plate 98 stuck behind the left edge of the leaf from top to bottom. Fortunately, it does not cover any of the text, since it remains stuck to the under side of the leaf. The *editio princeps* of John 14:8–26 does not include the fragment of John 12:47–49, which the *editio princeps* of all that belongs on John 12:47–13:10 had included.³⁴

A photograph from the British Museum shows John 14:8–26 without the misplaced fragment of John 12:47–49 at the top, which on the photograph of the British Museum lies correctly placed at the top of the page with John 12:47–13:10 (page 223). The fragment at the bottom left half of the page containing the first few letters of each line does not appear in the leaf with John 12:47–13:10. That fragment appears instead on a separate photograph of just that long fragment with the leather behind it.

The *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷ lists six new variants. At John 12:49 P^{75} reads “vid” ἔδωκεν, against the critical text. At John 13:1 P^{75} reads ἦλθεν with the critical text. At John 13:3 P^{75} reads εἰδὼς ὅτι, without naming Jesus, thus agreeing with the critical text, and δέδωκεν, against the critical text. At John 13:6 P^{75} omits καὶ, with the critical text. At John 13:10 P^{75} omits the definite article with Jesus, against the critical text.

The *apparatus criticus* of *The Greek New Testament*⁴ has three new variants listed. At John 13:2, P^{75} reads “vid” Ἰσκαριώτης against the critical text. (The *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷ does not list this!) At John 13:10, P^{75} reads “vid” οὐκ ἔχει χρείαν, with the critical text, and ἦ τοὺς πόδας νίψασθαι against the critical text.

■ John 14:8–26

The *editio princeps* has as a caption at the top of the page: “Jean XIV:17–26 (couverture*),” (“John 14:17–26 [binding]”), with a note at the bottom: “Cette page d’un feuillet utilisé pour la confection de la reliure (v. intr. pp. 5, 9 et 11–13)

³⁴ Ibid., 81–82.

n'a pu être photographiée," ("This page of a leaf used in making the binding [see the introduction, pages 5, 9, and 11–13] could not be photographed").³⁵ But Plate 98 does in fact reproduce the photograph of John 14:8–26! On the other hand, the following page of the *editio princeps* has a caption at the top of the page: "Jean XIV:26–XV:8," with no reference to the cover and no corresponding note at the bottom.³⁶ But we have no Plate 99, where one would expect John 14:26–15:8! Apparently the reference to the cover and the corresponding note at the bottom that occur on page 82 really belong on page 83.

Although absent from the British Museum's photograph of the leaf with John 14:8–26, the long thin fragment at the bottom left half of the page, which contains the first few letters of each line, appears on a separate photograph of just that long fragment with the leather behind it.

The *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*³⁷ has one new variant listed. Against the critical edition, John 14:22 lacks the definite article preceding Iscariot.

The *apparatus criticus* of *The Greek New Testament*⁴ lists this same variant.

■ John 14:26–15:10 (Page 224)

The *editio princeps* has the caption "Jean XIV:26–XV:8,"³⁷ with a minimal transcription of John 14:26–15:8. It lacks John 14:30–15:6 completely as well as 15:9–10, and does not even acknowledge the latter in the caption. When something appears transcribed in the bulk of the page, it has only a very few letters per line, and most appear dotted. The *editio princeps* does not have plate 99, which would have reproduced this page.

The photographs of the British Museum provide the explanation. We have photographs of major parts of the page before their conservation began, or, more probably, before it had advanced very far, for the surface appears largely blackened with vestiges of leather and of residual black coloration remaining after the removal of the leather itself. Then we have photographs of the British Museum where the Museum has largely removed the blackening and has assembled the fragments into a relatively complete page (although the bottom half of the page lacks the right edge of each line).

Let us begin with the bottom half of the page.

Since the last five lines (from John 15:9–10) do not appear in the *editio princeps*, clearly no one had yet identified the two bottom fragments, one on the left and one on the right.

Just above these bottom two fragments of John 15:9–10 we see, just below the center of the page, three fragments side by side, which make almost complete lines. The few, mostly dotted, letters of John 15:7 in the *editio princeps* indicate

³⁵ Ibid., 82.

³⁶ Ibid., 83.

³⁷ Ibid., 83.

that two of these three remained in place: the one at the center and the one on the right side. Yet we discern more letters on a blackened photograph of the British Museum. Since these additional letters do not appear in the transcription of the *editio princeps*, someone must have removed some of the surface blackening at the British Museum before taking the first pictures. Then we see a final photograph by the British Museum where the reassembled leaf, with most of the blackening removed, makes the page much more legible. I consider this photograph, reproduced on page 224 of the present essay, the most important of those from the British Museum.

The photograph of the British Museum before the removal of the surface blackening includes the following: the lower left fragment, but not the lower right fragment (which appears on a separate photograph of this fragment together with one of John 13:10 that we see also at the bottom of the photograph of the assembled leaf John 12:47–13:10); the three parallel fragments just below the center of the page that comprise relatively complete lines; and the relatively large fragment just above them on the left with vestiges of ten lines and the left margin. The transcription of the *editio princeps* does not include this fragment from John 14:31–15:3.

We turn to the top of the page. The fragment at the top left, including the left margin with the opening letters of about nine lines from John 14:27–29, appears transcribed in the *editio princeps*. Touching the right edge of the first two lines of this fragment, we may discern vestiges of a separate very small fragment. We can identify it as separate because it appears more legible than the other lines, and both the alignment of the letters and the letters themselves do not fit the text of the fragment on the left. Another small but more legible fragment appears just to the right of its bottom part. Then we see the much larger fragment to its right, including the right margin. We see three small, hardly legible fragments in the middle of the page, all three absent from the *editio princeps*, which reads no text at all in John 14:30–15:6.

The *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷, has six new variants. At John 14:31, \mathfrak{P}^{75} reads “vid” ἐντολὴν ἔδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ, against the critical text. In John 15:2, \mathfrak{P}^{75} reads φέρων καρπὸν, against the critical text, and in John 15:5, \mathfrak{P}^{75} reads οὐδὲ ἔν, against the critical text. In John 15:6, \mathfrak{P}^{75} reads μένη, with the critical text, and “vid” αὐτά, with the critical text. In John 15:9, \mathfrak{P}^{75} reads ὑμᾶς ἡγάπησα, with the critical text. In John 15:10, \mathfrak{P}^{75} reads “vid” τοῦ πατρὸς τὰς ἐντολάς, against the critical text.

The *apparatus criticus* of *The Greek New Testament*⁴ lists no new variants.

■ Evaluating the Results

The fragments from the cartonnage of \mathfrak{P}^{75} have thus “cast their vote” in the *apparatus criticus* of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁷ on eighteen textual variants. Since no changes occur in the critical text of the New Testament itself between the 26th and 27th editions, we cannot identify the influence of the cartonnage of \mathfrak{P}^{75} in actually changing a reading in the critical text. Indeed, the variants in the

cartonnage do not have great significance and hence will hardly change the Greek text of future critical editions. Yet we should consider anything in \mathfrak{P}^{75} important and worth rescuing.³⁸

In comparing the fragments from the cartonnage of \mathfrak{P}^{75} with the exciting number of early papyrus fragments of Luke and John that have recently emerged, most but not all from the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, we see that the fragments from the cartonnage of \mathfrak{P}^{75} can well hold their own:

\mathfrak{P}^{97} (sixth–seventh cent., P.Chester Beatty 17) contains text from Luke 14:7–14. In Luke 14:10, it shows one variant that agrees with the critical text and one “vid” variant against the critical text. In Luke 14:13, we see one variant that agrees with the critical text.

\mathfrak{P}^{111} (third cent., P.Oxy. 4495) shows text from Luke 17:11–13; 17:22–23. In Luke 17:12, it has one variant that agrees with the critical text.

\mathfrak{P}^{106} (third cent., P.Oxy. 4445) contains text from John 1:29–35; 1:40–46. In John 1:30, it has one variant “vid” that agrees with the critical text. In John 1:34, it has one variant “vid” against the critical text. In John 1:42, we see one variant that agrees with the critical text, and in John 1:45 one variant that agrees with the critical text.

\mathfrak{P}^{95} (third cent., Florence) shows text from John 5:26–29, 36–38. John 5:36 has one variant against the critical text. John 5:37 has one variant that agrees with the critical text.

\mathfrak{P}^{93} (fifth cent., Florence) has text from John 13:15–17 and no variants listed.

\mathfrak{P}^{107} (third cent., P.Oxy. 4446) shows text from John 17:1–2; 17:11. John 17:2 has one variant against the critical text. John 17:11 has one variant “vid” against the critical text.

\mathfrak{P}^{108} (third cent., P.Oxy. 4447) shows text from John 17:23–24; 18:1–5. In John 17:24, it shows one variant “vid” against the critical text.

\mathfrak{P}^{90} (second cent., P.Oxy. 3253) has text from John 18:36–19:1; 19:2–7. In John 18:38, we see one variant that agrees with the critical text, and in John 18:39, one variant that agrees with the critical text. John 19:1 has one variant against the critical text. John 19:3 has one variant that agrees with the critical text. John 19:4 has two variants against the critical text. John 19:6 has one variant “vid” against the critical text. John 19:7 has one variant against the critical text.

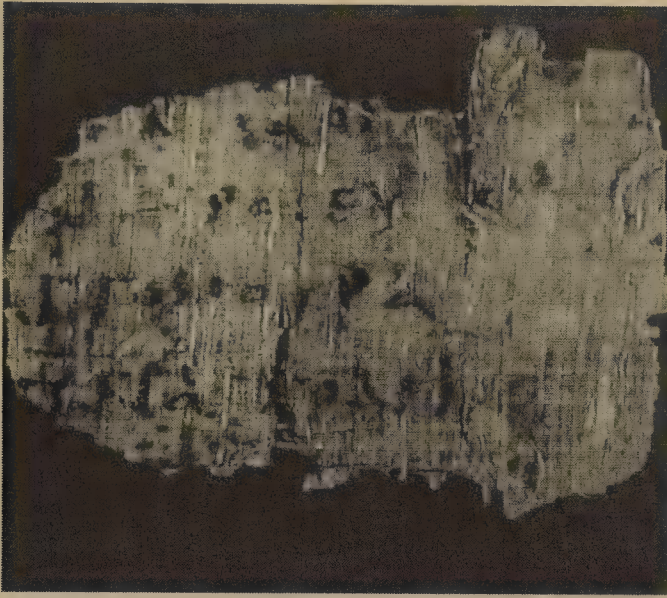
\mathfrak{P}^{109} (third cent., P.Oxy. 4448) shows text from John 21:18–20; 21:23–25. In John 21:20, we find one variant “vid” that agrees with the critical text.

The number of textual variants in Luke and John resulting from the photographs of the cartonnage of \mathfrak{P}^{75} taken by the British Museum thus compares favorably with the number of textual variants found in recently accessible papyrus fragments.

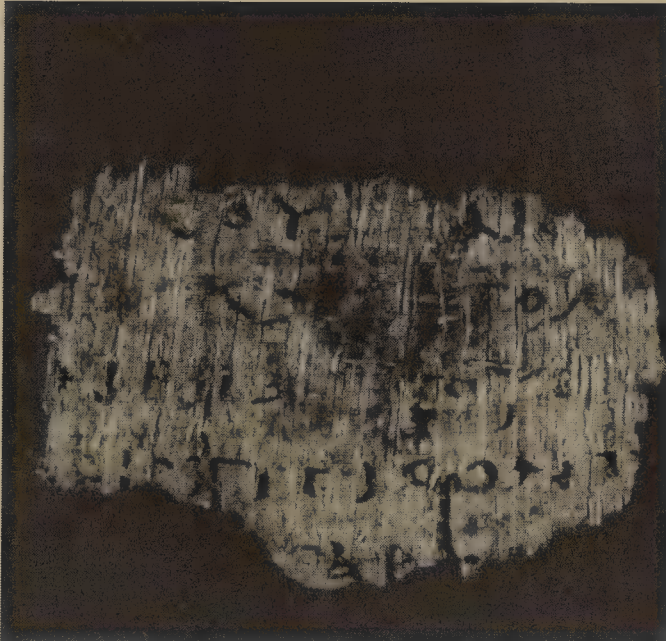
³⁸ Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*²⁶ (1979), revised in the seventh printing (1983), here 8. Druck (1985), stated in the Introduction (pp. 48*–49*): “Only those Greek manuscripts can be mentioned here whose significance merits their citation for each variant, i.e., the “constant witnesses,” . . . All of the above papyri and uncials are cited in each instance for each variant when they are extant for the passage. Among them \mathfrak{P}^{75} is the most significant.”

From the cartonnage of \mathfrak{P}^{75} , we count eighteen new variants, five from Luke (four agreeing with the critical text, one against the critical text) and thirteen from John (five agreeing with the critical text, eight against the critical text). From the recently accessible papyrus fragments, we count twenty-two variants, four from Luke (three agreeing with the critical text, one against the critical text) and eighteen from John (eight agreeing with the critical text, ten against the critical text).

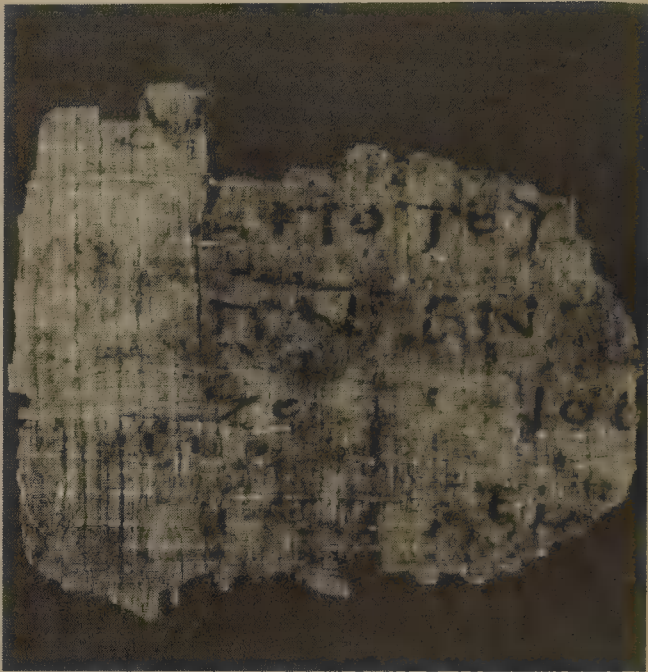
This analysis constitutes only a rough comparison of the fragments from the cartonnage of \mathfrak{P}^{75} , first documented from the photographs of the cartonnage when the British Museum conserved it, with the early papyrus fragments of Luke and John that have recently emerged. Yet it serves to illustrate the great importance of these photographs and of the fragments visible on these photographs. The fragments, if not the photographs, presumably went back from the British Museum to the Bibliothèque Bodmer, and from there to the Vatican, when the Pope received \mathfrak{P}^{75} on 22 January 2007.



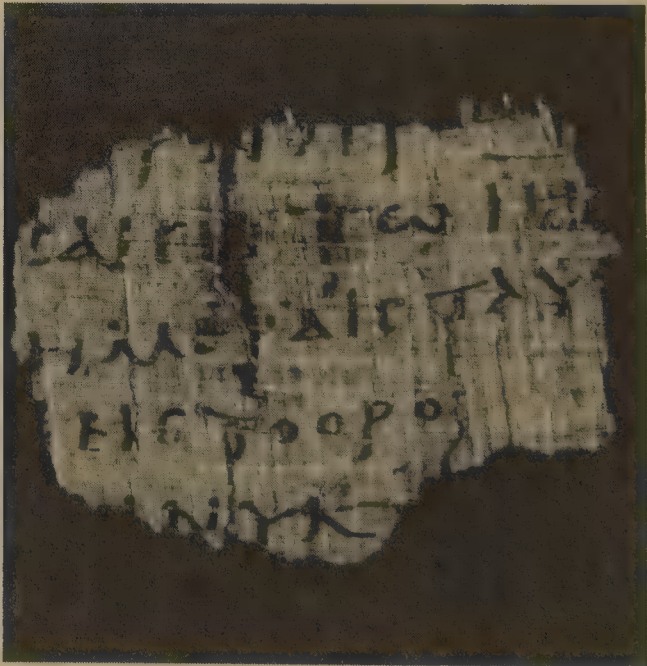
Luke 3:21-22



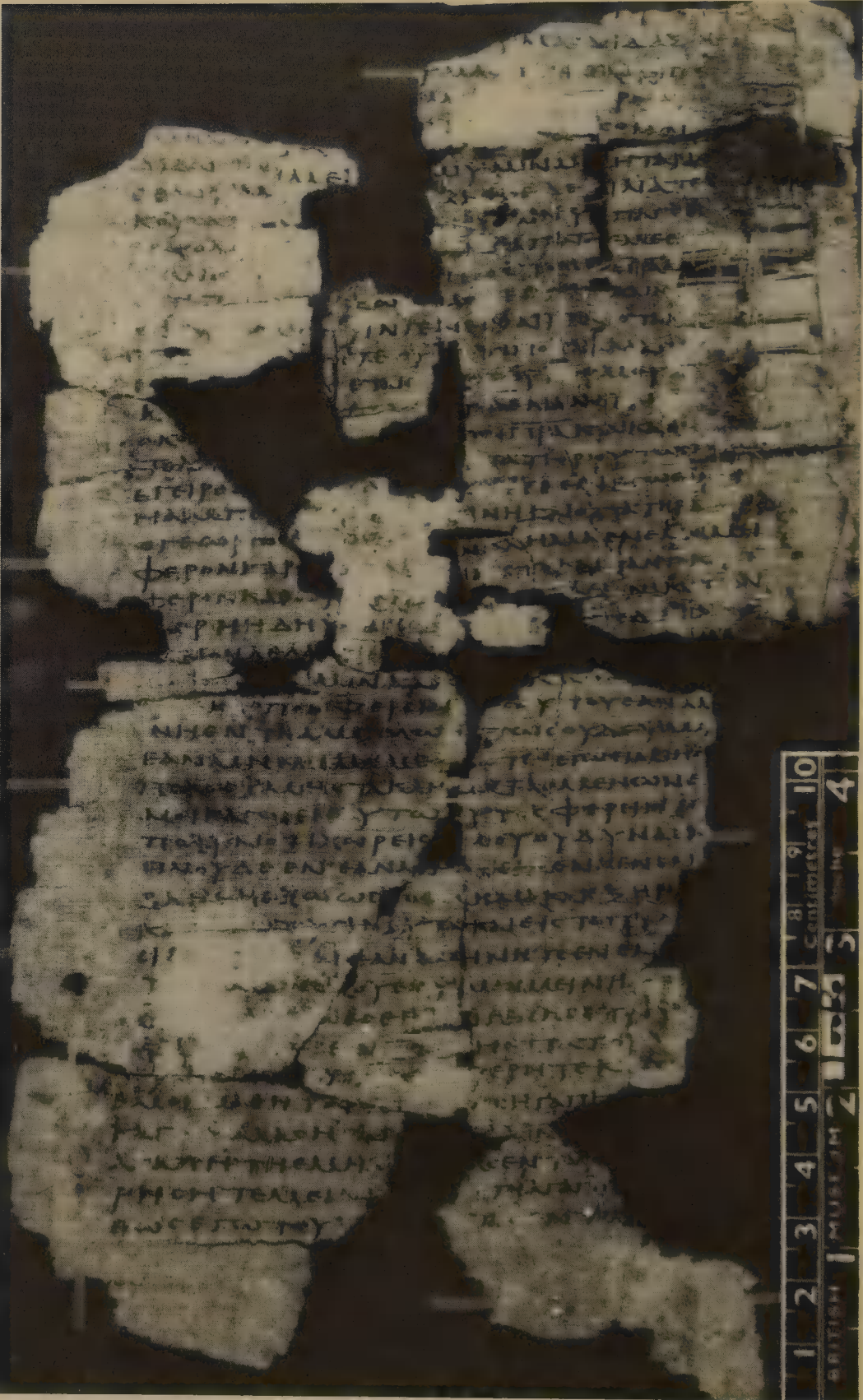
Luke 5:37-39



Luke 4:1-2



Luke 6:11-12



John 14:26–15:10

Modernity and Jewish Orthodoxy: Nietzsche and Soloveitchik on Life-Affirmation, Asceticism, and Repentance*

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Much ink has been spilt over the question of “Nietzsche and the Jews”¹ ever since the distortion of Nietzsche’s manuscripts by his sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, forged the links with Nazism that would be further developed by the likes of Alfred

* We wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for *HTR* for useful criticism of earlier drafts of this paper. We also wish to thank David-Hillel Ruben and Daniel Statman for helpful comments and criticisms, and Tamra Wright and the late Louis Jacobs for useful discussion.

¹ Translations of Nietzsche’s works are cited by part and/or section number and are abbreviated as follows:

- A *The Antichrist*, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (trans. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Penguin Books, 1976) 565–656.
- BGE *Beyond Good and Evil* (trans. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Random House, 1966)
- D *Daybreak* (trans. R. J. Hollingdale; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)
- EH *Ecce Homo* (trans. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Random House, 1967)
- GM *On the Genealogy of Morals* (trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale; New York: Random House, 1967)
- GS *The Gay Science* (trans. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Random House, 1974)
- HH *Human, All Too Human* (trans. R. J. Hollingdale; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- TI *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (trans. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Penguin Books, 1976) 463–563.
- WP *The Will to Power* (trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale; New York: Random House, 1967)
- Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (trans. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Penguin Books, 1976) 103–439.

Works by Joseph B. Soloveitchik are cited by page number and are abbreviated as follows:

Bäumler into a “carefully orchestrated cult.”² Though it is a portrait long dismissed in the academic world, a combination of Nazi propaganda and some subsequent scholarship has ensured that the picture of Nietzsche as a virulent anti-Semite who provided Nazism with its conceptual underpinnings lingers in the popular mind. Most scholars, however, now accept at worst a more ambivalent picture.³ Others go beyond ambivalence, with Weaver Santaniello turning the accusation of anti-Semitism on its head by arguing that Nietzsche’s contempt for anti-Semitism was one of the driving forces behind his critique of liberal Christianity, which in its use of “conservative theological concepts . . . perpetuate[s] anti-Semitism.”⁴ Even Crane Brinton, arguably one of those scholars most responsible for perpetuating the misrepresentation of Nietzsche as an anti-Semite, insisted that he had never maintained “that Nietzsche was a ‘proto-Nazi’.”⁵ But whilst Nietzsche is almost universally exonerated from the charge of personal anti-Semitism, Brinton’s claim that “occasionally [Nietzsche] comes very close indeed to the Nazi program,”⁶ though based on poor use of Nietzsche’s writings and rightly dismissed by Walter Kaufmann,⁷ continues to find echoes even amongst more careful Nietzsche scholars, who claim that he “did have some responsibility for Nazi crimes.”⁸

Generally speaking, it seems possible to study Nietzsche’s relationship with Judaism from two different perspectives. First, one might concentrate on his attitude to the Judaism or Jews of clearly demarcated historical periods. Duffy and Mittelman, for example, have advanced a nuanced and persuasive thesis, arguing that comprehensive analysis of the Nietzschean canon reveals a three-fold distinction that emerges fully only in some of Nietzsche’s later writings, particularly

FR *Family Redeemed: Essays on Family Relationships* (ed. David Shatz and Joel B. Wolowelsky; Jersey City: Ktav, 2000)

HM *Halakhic Man* (trans. Lawrence Kaplan; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1983)

SP “Sacred and Profane,” in *Shiurei Harav* (ed. Joseph Epstein; Hoboken: Ktav, 1974) 4–32.

UM “Uvikashtem MiSham,” in *Halakhic Man—Revealed and Hidden* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1979) 115–235. Translations are our own.

² So described in the introduction to *Nietzsche: Godfather of Fascism?* (ed. Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 2.

³ Examples can be found in Arnold Eisen, “Nietzsche and the Jews Reconsidered,” *Jewish Social Studies* 48 (1986) 1–14; Siegfried Mandel, *Nietzsche and the Jews* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998); and Menahem Brinker, “Nietzsche and the Jews,” in *Nietzsche: Godfather of Fascism?*, 107–25. The Golomb and Wistrich collection contains a good selection of views on the topic.

⁴ Donna Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994) 133. Another version of the more philo-Semitic line can be found in Jacob Golomb, “Nietzsche’s Judaism of Power,” *Revue des études Juives* 146–47 (1988) 353–85.

⁵ Crane Brinton, *Nietzsche* (New York: Harper, 1965) vii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁷ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) 291–92.

⁸ Golomb and Wistrich, introduction to *Nietzsche: Godfather of Fascism?*, 9.

Beyond Good and Evil and *On the Genealogy of Morals*. An early and unthinking flirtation with anti-Semitism that Nietzsche himself later described as “a brief daring sojourn in very infected territory,”⁹ is soon replaced by admiration for both the pre-prophetic sections of the Old Testament and the nineteenth-century European Jewry of his day. His scorn, on the other hand, was directed at the priestly-prophetic Judaism of later biblical times, though his criticisms in this context are “almost always directly connected to his criticisms of Christianity. That is, they are the features which, in his view, Christianity went on to develop.”¹⁰

Others who take this moderate line note how Nietzsche’s praise for the Jews is usually based on the positive uses to which they put what he once described as “their capital in will and spirit accumulated from generation to generation in a long school of suffering.”¹¹ As one who reminds us that “profound suffering makes noble,”¹² it is unsurprising that Nietzsche admires the Jews for what Jacob Golomb calls the “patterns of positive power”¹³ that they exhibit despite, or indeed because of their history of suffering.¹⁴ But such admiration is not therefore explicitly based on any consideration of Jewish theological or religious commitments.

The second option for study would be to focus on the conceptual issue of Nietzsche’s critique of religion as it applies to Judaism. Undoubtedly, points of conflict between Nietzsche’s philosophy and Jewish tradition are numerous and striking. Section 125 of *The Gay Science*, perhaps Nietzsche’s most celebrated declaration of atheism, featuring the madman’s announcement that “God is dead,” is hardly likely to strike a responsive chord with a religious tradition based on uncompromising monotheism.¹⁵ In fact, Nietzsche declares that he is an atheist

⁹ BGE §251. Inexplicably, this is one of the sections that Brinton quotes to support his claims about the Nazi overtones of Nietzsche’s thought.

¹⁰ Michael F. Duffy and Willard Mittelman, “Nietzsche’s Attitudes Toward the Jews,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1988) 301–17, at 307. Nietzsche often expressed his preference for the Old Testament over the New; see, e.g., BGE §52; GM 3, §22. Duffy and Mittelman’s three-fold distinction is substantially anticipated in Israel Eldad, “Nietzsche and the Old Testament,” in *Studies in Nietzsche and the Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (ed. James C. O’Flaherty, Timothy F. Sellner and Robert M. Helm; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985) 47–68. A similar position is articulated by Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle: Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998) 117. Yovel presents this analysis in earlier works also, e.g., in his “Nietzsche and the Jews: The Structure of an Ambivalence,” in *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture* (ed. Jacob Golomb; London: Routledge, 1997) 118.

¹¹ HH 1, §475,

¹² BGE §270.

¹³ See Golomb, “Nietzsche’s Judaism of Power,” 354.

¹⁴ See, e.g., D §205.

¹⁵ As Shalom Rosenberg points out, “God is dead” is a more ambitious claim than “God does not exist.” The latter is a metaphysical thesis; the former is also an anthropological one that hints at the human need for God and the tragic implications for humanity of his “death.” See Shalom Rosenberg, “Nietzsche and the Morality of Judaism,” in *Nietzsche, Zionism and Hebrew Culture* (Hebrew) (ed. Jacob Golomb; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2002) 317–45, esp. 319.

as “a matter of course . . . from instinct.”¹⁶ Nietzsche’s atheism is of course far from incidental; rather it constitutes the fulcrum of his philosophy. Broadening the picture to encompass the moral arena, it is clear that Nietzsche deeply opposes the classical Jewish *Weltanschauung* in crucial ways. For example, he criticizes the notion of a moral world order, sin, conscience, guilt and pity as outgrowths of priestly *ressentiment* and hatred of life, and he insists that human beings inhabit a purposeless and meaningless universe in which we must create our own values. The universe is not a lawful cosmos but chaos, characterized by constant change, flux and struggle. Nietzsche’s views on metaphysical issues are no more sympathetic to traditional Jewish approaches—his consistent rejection of the idea that there is any kind of world beyond this one, whether of a Platonic, Kantian or religious variety, being an obvious case in point.¹⁷

Such antinomies, and others, have led some Jewish thinkers to view Nietzsche’s philosophy as entirely hostile to Judaism. In an extraordinarily sharp formulation, Jonathan Sacks writes:

I, for one, find Nietzsche the very antithesis of Jewish values. I take no pleasure in the fact that, from time to time, he found nice things to say about Jews ancient and modern. The man who expressed contempt for “pity, the kind and helping hand, the warm heart, patience, industriousness, humility, friendliness” defined for all time what Judaism is not. I read him to know what Judaism is the battle against, then, now, and for the future.¹⁸

In this paper, we aim to go beyond the analyses sketched above, which tend to construe the relationship between Nietzsche and Judaism in very general terms without engaging significantly with the details of Jewish philosophy and theology. It is that detailed engagement with Jewish thought that we wish to begin here. Thus, our central concern is the hitherto somewhat neglected issue of the compatibility of Nietzsche’s philosophy and Jewish thought itself, with particular emphasis on the modern era and the fundamental question of whether his critique undermines contemporary interpretations of Judaism as a continuing living tradition. We will try to show that, despite the many irreducible conflicts between Nietzsche’s philosophy and Jewish tradition outlined above, there are at least two central areas (central for both Judaism and Nietzsche) in which Nietzsche’s ideas resonate strongly with at least some important strands in modern Jewish thought, and in particular with the thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903–1993), the leading twentieth-century exponent of modern Jewish Orthodoxy (henceforth “modern Orthodoxy”). Whilst their relaxation of halakhic demands and reinterpretation of many of the

¹⁶ *EH* 2, §1.

¹⁷ See, for example, Zarathustra’s famous injunction to remain faithful to the earth and not to grant credence to those who speak of other-worldly hopes (Z, Prologue, §3), and Nietzsche’s condemnation of “the concept of the ‘beyond’, the ‘true world’ invented in order to devaluate the only world there is—in order to retain no goal, no reason, no task for our earthly reality!” (*EH* 4, §8).

¹⁸ Jonathan Sacks, review of *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture*, ed. Jacob Golomb, *Le’ela* 47 (1999) 62.

more supernatural theological concepts might make progressive denominations of Judaism the most likely candidates for some sort of Nietzschean revaluation,¹⁹ our argument will be that there are significant Nietzschean resonances in modern Orthodox Judaism, a form of Judaism which claims continued fidelity to the classical rabbinic tradition. Moreover, these Nietzschean themes are adopted by modern Orthodoxy in order to deflect the Nietzschean critique of religion itself. In essence, therefore, this paper is a case study in how modern Orthodoxy parries the modern critique of religion by partially absorbing it.

It is important to emphasise that we are focusing on Nietzsche and Soloveitchik as prominent *representatives* of broader trends in modern thought and modern Orthodoxy respectively. We do not deny that some of Nietzsche's attitudes are part of the much wider contemporary Western *Weltanschauung* that was a formative influence on Soloveitchik's thought. We have, however, selected these two thinkers as particularly potent spokesmen for these trends. Moreover, the quasi-religious nature of some of Nietzsche's language and the fact that, as will be illustrated later, some of Soloveitchik's particular formulations carry strong Nietzschean resonances make these two thinkers appropriate foci for our analysis. We will concentrate first on an essential element of the Nietzschean critique of ancient priestly Judaism and his views on the related issues of life-affirmation, asceticism and the passions. We will then turn to the concept of repentance.

■ Life-Affirmation, Asceticism and the Passions

In this section, we shall first illustrate that Nietzsche considered Judaism, as well as Christianity, guilty of a negative attitude towards the world and hostility towards the passions. We shall then try to demonstrate how Soloveitchik's stance on these matters largely avoids falling foul of the Nietzschean critique and indeed, at certain points, echoes Nietzsche both linguistically and conceptually. Finally, we shall show how Soloveitchik privileges some strands in traditional rabbinic and later discussion of asceticism and the passions in arriving at his distinctively modern perspective on these issues.

¹⁹ Indeed, elements of Duffy and Mittelman's threefold distinction coincide with the four eras of Judaism discussed by one of the most significant early reform theologians Abraham Geiger. Geiger is similarly well disposed towards the pre-prophetic era for the rather Nietzschean reason that it was a period "of vigorous creation, unfettered and unhindered." (Abraham Geiger, "A General Introduction to the Science of Judaism," in *Abraham Geiger and Liberal Judaism* [comp. Max Wiener; trans. Ernst Schlochau; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1981] 156). He also has high hopes for the era of liberation that corresponds to Nietzsche's modern Judaism. Interestingly though, the second period, that of tradition, which takes place in Duffy and Mittelman's priestly-prophetic era, for Geiger, lasts until the sixth-century completion of the Babylonian Talmud, and is seen as one that "took root in the spiritual heritage of the past and at the same time *still maintained a certain degree of freedom in its approach to that heritage*" (ibid., emphasis added). Geiger's ire is reserved for the period of rigid legalism "characterized by toilsome preoccupation with the heritage as it then stood," (ibid.), which lasted from the sixth until the eighteenth century.

Nietzsche's Critique of Ancient Judaism and Christianity

Nietzsche's affirmation of this life and this world is of course a central motif of his thought and is expressed in many places in his oeuvre.²⁰ Nietzsche recommends *amor fati*, the love of one's life just for what it is.²¹ The doctrine of the eternal recurrence, understood in existential terms as the test of one's willingness to embrace the notion of the infinite repetition of one's life in all its details despite the lack of any meaning beyond that life or of any metaphysical consolation—and hence understood as the test of one's greatness—is perhaps Nietzsche's most extreme version of life-affirmation.²²

Particularly in Nietzsche's late writings, Christian asceticism and indeed Christianity itself are consistently and harshly criticized as the antithesis of life-affirmation in passages such as the following:

It was Christianity, with its *ressentiment* against life at the bottom of its heart, which first made something unclean of sexuality: it threw *filth* on the origin, on the presupposition of our life.²³

Once one has comprehended the outrage of such a revolt against life as has become almost sacrosanct in Christian morality, one has, fortunately, also comprehended something else: the futility, apparentness, absurdity and *mendaciousness* of such a revolt.²⁴

The Christian conception of God . . . is one of the most corrupt conceptions of the divine ever attained on earth . . . God degenerated to the *contradiction* of life, instead of being its transfiguration and eternal Yes! God as the declaration of war against life, against nature, against the will to live!²⁵

Nietzsche writes of the kind of asceticism that he considers favoured by Christianity: "[O]ne may without any exaggeration call it *the true calamity* in the history of European health."²⁶

Moreover, Christianity's life-denying nature issues in an inverse—and perverse—system of values:

Wherever the theologians' instinct extends, *value judgements* have been stood on their heads and the concepts "true" and "false" are of necessity

²⁰ See e.g. Z, Prologue, §3; 1, §3; and 1, §4; as well as TI 5.

²¹ E.g., GS §276; EH 2, §10.

²² See our fuller discussion of the eternal recurrence in the section, "A Nietzschean Perspective: Eternal Return and Repentance of Love," below.

²³ TI 10, §4.

²⁴ TI 5, §5.

²⁵ A §18.

²⁶ GM 3, §21. Nietzsche states explicitly several times in GM 3 that, nevertheless, the ascetic ideal is, paradoxically, necessary and life-promoting. For a lucid discussion of this and other complexities regarding Nietzsche's attitude to asceticism, see Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985) 114–37.

reversed: whatever is most harmful to life is called “true”; whatever elevates it, enhances, affirms, justifies it, and makes it triumphant, is called “false.”²⁷

Nietzsche explicitly holds Judaism, as well as Christianity, responsible for fostering a negative attitude toward life and the world. He accuses the Jews of hostility to the natural—“whatever is natural is considered ignoble.”²⁸ Indeed, in a celebrated passage, he accuses the Hebrew prophets of being the originators of this attitude, which is identical with the “slave rebellion in morals”:

The Jews—a people “born for slavery,” as Tacitus and the whole ancient world say . . . have brought off that miraculous feat of an inversion of values . . . their prophets have fused “rich,” “godless,” “evil,” “violent,” and “sensual” into one and were the first to use the word “world” as an opprobrium. This inversion of values (which includes using the word “poor” as synonymous with “holy” and “friend”) constitutes the significance of the Jewish people: they mark the beginning of the slave rebellion in morals.²⁹

As Nietzsche makes clear in *GM* 1, §7, this slave rebellion in morality for which ancient “priestly” Judaism was responsible is, from his perspective, a negative phenomenon of world-historical proportions. The Jewish revaluation of aristocratic values was inherited by Christianity (“One knows *who* inherited this Jewish revaluation”) and is ultimately responsible for the corrupt, decadent state (in Nietzsche’s view) of contemporary Western values. The slave revolt in morality is a “tremendous and immeasurably fateful initiative,” the “most fundamental of all declarations of war,” and is something “which we no longer see because it—has been victorious.”

Closely related to these critiques of Judaism and Christianity are Nietzsche’s objections to the treatment of the passions in those faiths. In an important passage, Nietzsche deplores the radical and uncompromising nature of what he understands as the Christian stance on the passions:

Formerly, in view of the element of stupidity in passion, war was declared on passion itself, its destruction was plotted; all the old moral monsters are agreed on this: *il faut tuer les passions*. The most famous formula for this is to be found in the New Testament, in that Sermon on the Mount . . . [where] it is said, for example, with particular reference to sexuality: “if thy eye offend thee, pluck it out.” Fortunately, no Christian acts in accordance with this precept. *Destroying* the passions and cravings, merely as a preventative measure against their stupidity and the unpleasant consequences of this stupidity—today this itself strikes us as merely another acute form of

²⁷ A §9.

²⁸ *GS* §135.

²⁹ *BGE* §195. Nietzsche does not believe that Judaism was always hostile to life. His view is that “[o]riginally, especially at the time of the Kings, Israel also stood in the right, that is, the natural, relationship to all things”, but that subsequently “priestly agitators” fostered a morality “no longer the expression of the conditions for the life and growth of a people, no longer its most basic instinct of life, but . . . become the antithesis of life . . . the ‘evil eye’ for all things” (A §25).

stupidity. We no longer admire dentists who “pluck out” teeth so that they will not hurt anymore. . . . To be fair, it should be admitted, however, that on the ground out of which Christianity grew the concept of the “*spiritualization* of passion” could never have been formed. After all the first church, as is well known, fought *against* the “intelligent” in favour of the “poor in spirit.” How could one expect from it an intelligent war against passion? The church fights passion with excision in every sense: its practice, its “cure” is *castration*. It never asks: “How can one spiritualize, beautify, deify a craving?” It has at all times laid the stress of discipline on extirpation (of sensuality, of pride, of the lust to rule, of avarice, of vengefulness). But an attack on the roots of passion means an attack on the roots of life: the practice of the church is *hostile to life*.³⁰

For Nietzsche, then, any attempt to deal with the potentially damaging potency of the passions by uprooting them is unintelligent—the “throwing out of the baby with the bath water”—and, far worse, constitutes an assault on life itself. What is required, instead, is what Christianity has failed to accomplish—the spiritualization or sublimation of the passions.

In a similar passage, Nietzsche excoriates “the insanity of religious moralists” in desiring the extirpation of the passions:

Instead of taking into service the great sources of strength, those impetuous torrents of the soul that are often so dangerous and overwhelming, and economizing them, this most shortsighted and pernicious mode of thought, the moral mode of thought, wants to make them dry up.³¹

On this charge as well, Nietzsche does not absolve Judaism of blame. Indeed, he indicates that Christian hostility towards the passions is rooted in Christianity’s Jewish origins:

People like St. Paul have an evil eye for the passions . . . hence their idealistic tendency aims at the annihilation of the passions. . . . Very differently from St. Paul and the Jews, the Greeks directed their idealistic tendency precisely toward the passions. . . . And the Christians? Did they want to become Jews in this respect? Did they perhaps succeed?³²

Soloveitchik’s View

In *Halakhic Man*, Soloveitchik presents, within a religious framework, a highly positive view of this world very far removed from the *ressentiment* or hostility towards life that Nietzsche so despised. Soloveitchik is aware of the novelty of

³⁰ *TI* 5, §1.

³¹ *WP* §383. See also *WP* §384. As Graham Parkes points out (“Nietzsche and Zen Master Hakuin on the Roles of Emotion and Passion,” in *Nietzsche and the Gods* [ed. Weaver Santaniello; Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001] 121), the verb *ökonomisieren*, rooted in the word *oikos* (household), connotes, among other things, the domestication of the wildness of the passions.

³² *GS* §139.

his approach within a religious context and explicitly contrasts the endorsement of earthly existence characteristic of his typological Jewish hero, halakhic man, with the widespread religious approach:

Halakhic man's relationship to transcendence differs from that of the universal *homo religiosus*. Halakhic man does not long for a transcendent world, for "supernal" levels of a pure, pristine existence, for was not the ideal world—halakhic man's deepest desire, his darling child—created only for the purpose of being actualized in our real world? It is this world which constitutes the stage for the Halakhah, the setting for halakhic man's life.³³

Many religions view the phenomenon of death as a positive spectacle. . . . They . . . sanctify death and the grave because it is here that we find ourselves at the threshold of transcendence, at the portal of the world to come. Death is seen as a window filled with light, open to an exalted, supernal realm. Judaism, however . . . abhors death, organic decay, and dissolution. It bids one to choose life and sanctify it. Authentic Judaism as reflected in halakhic thought sees in death a terrifying contradiction to the whole of religious life. Death negates the entire magnificent experience of halakhic man.³⁴

In a formulation that conveys not simply the standard traditional view, that merits accrued in this world provide the entry visa to the world to come, but which in context suggests that eternal life is truly experienced in this world rather than the hereafter,³⁵ Soloveitchik declares:

It is here, in this world, that halakhic man acquires eternal life!³⁶

This Nietzschean-sounding formulation, which, with the omission of the word "halakhic," could easily be a formulation of the doctrine of the eternal recurrence, is followed by an ostensible proof-text from the Mishna:

"Better is one hour of Torah and mitzvot [commandments] in this world than the whole life of the world to come," stated the tanna [mishnaic authority] in Avot [4:17], and this declaration is the watchword of the halakhist.³⁷

³³ *HM*, 30.

³⁴ *HM*, 31. Soloveitchik contrasts the life-affirming nature of halakhic man not only with the outlook of the *homo religiosus* of other faiths, but even with other trends within Orthodox Judaism such as the early Musar movement, which "symbolized the world perspective of the universal *homo religiosus*, a perspective directed toward the transcendent . . . the nihility of this world, its emptiness and ugliness" (*HM*, 74). Even more significantly, as Allan Nadler has shown, Soloveitchik's life-affirming modernism departs radically from the Mithnagdic [anti-Hasidic] worldview of his forebears. "Soloveitchik's Halakhic Man: Not a Mithnagged," *Modern Judaism* 13 (1993) 119–47.

³⁵ Cf. *HM*, 35: "Temporal life becomes transformed into eternal life; it becomes sanctified and elevated with eternal holiness."

³⁶ *HM*, 30.

³⁷ *HM*, 30. *m. 'Abot* 4:17 actually reads: "Better is one hour of repentance and mitzvot in this world"

Revealingly, Soloveitchik omits from his citation of the passage in *Avot* the countervailing statements privileging life *after* death that immediately precede and follow. The immediately preceding statement, "This world can be compared to a corridor to the world to come: Prepare yourself in the corridor, so that you may enter the banquet hall,"³⁸ is referred to by Soloveitchik later in *Halakhic Man*, but only indirectly, and not in its straightforward meaning in the Mishna but as a metaphor describing the nature of the relationship between the ontological and the normative approaches to existence.³⁹ The statement in *Avot* directly following that cited by Soloveitchik reads: "And better is one hour of spiritual bliss in the world to come than the whole of life in this world."⁴⁰

A further daring formulation constitutes what is perhaps Soloveitchik's clearest ranking of the two worlds:

The Halakhah is not at all concerned with a transcendent world. The world to come is a tranquil, quiet world that is wholly good, wholly everlasting, and wholly eternal, wherein a man will receive the reward for the commandments which he performed in this world. However, the receiving of a reward is not a religious act; therefore, halakhic man prefers the real world to a transcendent existence, because here, in this world, man is given the opportunity to create, act, accomplish, while there, in the world to come, he is powerless to change anything at all.⁴¹

As Soloveitchik moves on to discuss the concept of holiness, one gets the sense that, had Nietzsche been a proponent of religious holiness, he would have characterized it similarly:

[T]he performance of [divine] commandments . . . is confined to this world, to physical, concrete reality, to clamorous, tumultuous life, pulsating with exuberance and strength. . . . Holiness means the holiness of earthly, here-and-now life. . . . The earth and bodily life are the very ground of the halakhic reality.⁴²

For all of his this-worldly orientation, however, halakhic man's *Weltanschauung* is rooted in the traditional Jewish belief-system. Thus

[H]alakhic man is not a secular, cognitive type, unconcerned with transcendence and totally under the sway of temporal life. God's Torah has implanted in halakhic man's consciousness both the idea of everlasting life and the desire for eternity. . . . His soul . . . thirsts for the living God.⁴³

³⁸ *m. 'Abot* 4:21.

³⁹ *HM*, 63.

⁴⁰ *m. 'Abot* 4:17.

⁴¹ *HM*, 32.

⁴² *HM*, 33–34. See also, especially, *HM*, 149 n. 41, where Soloveitchik explicitly contrasts the perspective of Halakhah with what he terms the Greek, and especially Platonic, "negation of the body"; and *HM*, 46: "An individual does not become holy . . . through mysterious union with the infinite . . . but, rather, through his whole biological life, through his animal actions."

⁴³ *HM*, 40.

Soloveitchik thus maintains a version of the traditional Jewish beliefs in the afterlife and the dualism which privileges the soul over the body. Yet these positions do not entail the denial of all value to this world, and, as we have seen, Soloveitchik is very far from issuing any such denial.

The tension between halakhic man's secular focus and his other-worldly ambitions is resolved, for Soloveitchik, in halakhic man's quest to infuse this-worldly existence with the transcendent. This project, once again, radically distinguishes him from *homo religiosus*, "a romantic who chafes against concrete reality and tries to flee to distant worlds."⁴⁴ Halakhic man, by contrast, "wishes to purify this world, not to escape from it. . . . The generation has not yet arisen that is fit to serve God through the negation of concrete existence and through casting off of the yoke of the senses and the body."⁴⁵

In *Family Redeemed*, a recently-published volume of essays drawn from unpublished manuscripts left by Soloveitchik after his death, we see spelled out some of the implications of the positive attitude towards this world developed in *Halakhic Man*. The view of the passions articulated by Soloveitchik in this work is not only unaffected by the Nietzschean critique of Judeo-Christianity outlined earlier; it is itself very Nietzschean. Soloveitchik writes:

[*P*]assio carnis, the suffering of the flesh . . . is not to be equated with self-torture, mortification of the flesh, or *odium mundi*, revulsion towards the world, the condemnation of natural drives or the deadening of the senses and the repression of the exercise of the natural faculties of man. Nothing of that sort was ever preached by Judaism. On the contrary, it displayed full confidence in the inner worth of the naturalness of man.⁴⁶

While Soloveitchik's claim that Judaism *never* advocated the kind of asceticism that he describes is, as we shall try to show in the section "Soloveitchik's Reading of Rabbinic Tradition" below, significantly exaggerated, what is evident from this passage is just how far his position is from the notion that "whatever is natural is considered ignoble"—Nietzsche's summation of the Judeo-Christian view cited earlier. Moreover, Soloveitchik's opposition here to the idea that the passions should be extirpated is unambiguous. In fact, just like Nietzsche, Soloveitchik believes that the passions should be harnessed and elevated rather than annihilated:

Judaism was opposed to any maiming of the natural life for the sake of some transcendental goal, since *holiness arises out of the naturalness of man* (*emphasis added*).⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *HM*, 40.

⁴⁵ *HM*, 41–43.

⁴⁶ *FR*, 75–76.

⁴⁷ *FR*, 77. It is noteworthy that another highly influential figure for modern Orthodoxy, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, adopts a closely similar view: "What is holiness? . . . The character of normal life is not annulled, normal human activity, the life of the private individual and of society, etiquette and respect, are not obliterated; rather they are elevated in an ideal ascent" (R. Abraham Isaac Kook, *Orot HaKodesh* [Hebrew] [3 vols.; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1978] 2:292). Rosenberg,

Soloveitchik's comments concerning sexual activity clearly illustrate his thesis:

On the one hand, Judaism never recommended sexual restraint nor exalted the state of celibacy or virginity. . . . A celibate life is considered by the Halakhah and the Aggadah as an unblessed state which contravenes a basic tenet of Judaism. . . . God Himself considered a self-denying solitary life of man or woman as bad. . . . On the other hand, Judaism could not approve of the natural sexual life without subjecting it to a remedial process of purification, as it was too well aware of all the evils intrinsic . . . in unharnessed and undisciplined sexual practices. . . . If it conforms to Halakhah, the catharsis of the sexual instinct justifies it completely. . . . The wedding's *nissuin* blessings, which deal with the dignity of man and his Divine charisma, are very indicative of our attitude towards a purged and remedied sexual desire.⁴⁸

Here is the "spiritualization of passion" which Nietzsche laments the lack of in *Twilight of the Idols*. To be sure, Nietzsche's conception of the spiritualization or "economizing" of the passions is located within a conceptual system and a network of objectives radically different from Soloveitchik's. For Nietzsche, economizing of the passions is a necessary condition of the secularized piety and this-worldly saintliness so central to his project.⁴⁹ For Soloveitchik, the redemption of the passions is a key component of a particular theistic way of life, the halakhic life of the Jew. Nevertheless, the commonality between Nietzsche and Soloveitchik is striking.

In a major Hebrew essay entitled, "And You Shall Seek From There," published many years before *Family Redeemed*, Soloveitchik had already expounded similar views. He asserts there that "the Torah never forbade the pleasures of this world and never demanded deprivations and afflictions."⁵⁰ Strikingly, he claims that "the elevation of the body is the entire Torah—the rest is [just] the interpretation [of this idea]."⁵¹ Again, he clearly endorses the Nietzschean thought that the passions are to be sublimated and not annihilated:

"Nietzsche and the Morality of Judaism," 337, highlights the life-affirmation common to Kook and Nietzsche. See also Smadar Sherlo, "Strength and Humility: Rabbi Kook's Moral System and Nietzsche's Morality of Power," (Hebrew) in *Nietzsche, Zionism and Hebrew Culture* (ed. Jacob Golomb; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 200) 347–74, on similarities between the two thinkers including life-affirmation and the insistence that the passions should be sublimated rather than quashed. Jason Rappoport, "Rav Kook and Nietzsche: A Preliminary Comparison of Their Ideas on Religions, Christianity, Buddhism and Atheism," *The Torah U-Madda Journal* 12 (2004) 99–129, alludes to the life-affirmation shared by the two thinkers but otherwise, in our view, mostly overstates the similarity between Nietzsche and Kook.

⁴⁸ *FR*, 77–78.

⁴⁹ See Leslie Paul Thiele, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul: A Study of Heroic Individualism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990) ch. 7.

⁵⁰ *UM*, 207–8.

⁵¹ *UM*, 207.

The sanctification of the human body, the refinement of animal life with all its abundant lusts and passions and its elevation to the level of the service of God—this is the aim of the Halakhah. Yet this refinement does not take place through negation and asceticism, but by the placing of direction and purpose upon natural life.⁵²

Soloveitchik goes so far as to argue explicitly in *UM* that the Halakhah prefers sublimated physical acts, including eating and even sexual intercourse, to prayer. He points out that many acts of eating (e.g., of sacrifices) are considered to be biblical commandments by all halakhic authorities, whereas only Maimonides takes prayer to be a biblical rather than merely a rabbinic obligation, and highlights the extensive treatment accorded by halakhic literature to the laws of forbidden sexual relationships and prohibited foods in contrast to the minimal coverage of the topic of prayer.⁵³

In short, Soloveitchik's trenchant life-affirmation, anti-asceticism and advocacy of the sublimation of the passions are diametrically opposed to the ancient "priestly" conception condemned by Nietzsche. Moreover, at times Soloveitchik's reflections on these themes echo Nietzsche on both the conceptual and linguistic levels.⁵⁴

Soloveitchik's Reading of Rabbinic Tradition

Unsurprisingly, the long and rich tradition of post-biblical Judaism does not present a uniform approach to the issue of asceticism and the passions. Indeed, we can discern two broadly opposing trends. Even a brief survey of traditional rabbinic perspectives will show that while Soloveitchik's position on asceticism and the passions certainly cannot be dismissed as lacking grounding in traditional Jewish sources, his reading of those sources is nonetheless highly selective.

On the one hand, classical rabbinic Judaism, while far from sanctioning hedonism or material excess, is often hostile to the ascetic ideal. This anti-asceticism sits well with the largely this-worldly focus of the Pentateuch itself. A significant number of rabbinic sources articulate a positive attitude toward physical pleasure. Perhaps the most celebrated teaching of this sort is that cited in the name of Rav in the Palestinian Talmud: "In the future, a person will be called to account for all that

⁵² *UM*, 207.

⁵³ *UM*, 208, 213–14.

⁵⁴ It is worth noting that Nietzsche is mentioned on seven occasions in *HM*, though never specifically in connection with life-affirmation, asceticism and the passions. See *HM*, 68, 109, 114, 141 n. 4, 152 n. 64 and 164 n. 147 (two occurrences).

his eyes saw and he did not eat.”⁵⁵ Other similarly anti-ascetic statements are not uncommon.⁵⁶

Regarding the passions, a well-known rabbinic homily applies the words of Gen 1:31, “And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good,” to the evil inclination, “because were it not for the evil inclination, no man would build a house, marry, have children or engage in commerce.”⁵⁷

The anti-ascetic trend in rabbinic tradition has found many echoes in subsequent Jewish thought, for example in Rabbi Judah Halevi’s insistence in the *Kuzari* that the Torah does not mandate the self-mortification of its adherents.⁵⁸ A more recent instance is the central Hasidic doctrine of *avodah begashmiyut*, “divine service through corporeality,” later endorsed in the thought of R. Kook.⁵⁹ The standard halakhic approach is that the proper intention that one should have during physical activity (e.g., eating), is to derive the strength necessary to serve God through prayer or observance of the commandments. The concept of *avodah begashmiyut* characteristically understands the corporeal act (e.g., eating), as *itself* constituting divine service if the correct meditations accompany it.⁶⁰ This is very close to the Soloveitchikian idea of harnessing and elevating the passions.

Other rabbinic teachings, however, pull in the opposite, ascetic direction. The very same Talmudic passage that criticizes fasting and the Nazirite reports the

⁵⁵ *y. Kiddushin* 4:12. Louis Jacobs in *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1999) 216, argues that this passage has been widely misunderstood and that Rav means simply that one must look after one’s health and not refrain from wholesome food. Jacobs’s evidence is the context of the passage, which appears soon after another teaching by Rav which focuses on the importance of protecting one’s health and well-being, namely that it is forbidden to live in a city which has no physician, bathhouse and courts to maintain law and order. The teaching of Rabbi Jose that one should also not live in a city with no vegetable garden comes next, followed by our passage. However, Jacobs ignores the possibility of thematic development. It is plausible that the intention of our passage is to go further than the statements that precede it by asserting that not only ought one to look after one’s health from the religious perspective, but one should make the effort to positively enjoy permitted food as well.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 45:5 on the barrenness of the Matriarchs as a divine device for rendering them more physically attractive to their husbands; *b. ‘Erub.* 54a on taking what physical pleasure is available in brief human existence; *b. Ta’an.* 11a (the statement of Samuel concerning fasting, and the view of Rabbi Eliezer HaKappar concerning the Nazirite; R. Eliezer’s statement also appears in *Sifre*, Num 30, *b. Ned.* 10a and elsewhere); the various statements endorsing relative freedom of sexual expression within marriage in *b. Ned.* 20b; the statement in the name of R. Yitzhak in *y. Ned.* 9:1, criticising the adoption of any prohibitions beyond those mentioned in the Torah; and the statements in *b. Yebam.* 62b about the deprivations suffered by an unmarried man.

⁵⁷ *Gen. Rab.* 9:7.

⁵⁸ *Kuzari* 2:50. Halevi expands on this theme in the same passage. See also *Kuzari* 3:1 and 3:5. In 3:1 Halevi states that the religious Jew “loves the world and length of days,” though this love is based on the radically non-Nietzschean grounds that these facilitate one’s portion in the world to come.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Kook, *Orot HaKodesh*, 3:292.

⁶⁰ See Norman Lamm, *The Religious Thought of Hasidism: Text and Commentary* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1999) ch. 9; Allan Nadler, *The Faith of the Mithnagdim: Rabbinic Responses to Hasidic Rapture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) 84–87.

dissenting view of R. Elazar, who praises the practice of fasting (at least for one who is able to withstand the fast), the Nazirite, and those who deny themselves pleasure from the physical world.⁶¹ Many other pro-ascetic statements can also be found in rabbinic literature.⁶²

During the medieval period, powerful ascetic trends also emerged in Jewish thought, most notably Bahya ibn Pakuda's *Hovot Halevavot* (The Book of Direction to the Duties of the Heart)⁶³ and the Hasidei Ashkenaz, the twelfth-century Franco-German pietists. Moreover, an important ascetic trend developed among the mystical pietists of sixteenth-century Safed, and was emphasized particularly in the works of Rabbi Isaac Luria's main disciple, Rabbi Hayyim Vital. A positive orientation towards the concept of *perishut* (asceticism) was a recurring theme in much of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century pietistic and ethical Hebrew literature. In response to Hasidism, *mithnagdic* literature was strongly ascetic. More recently still, an ascetic note was often sounded by the teachers of the nineteenth and twentieth-century Musar movement.⁶⁴ The active infliction of pain on oneself in order to facilitate repentance or self-improvement—practices such as self-flagellation and frequent fasting—has also been endorsed and practised by various groups at different points during the course of Jewish history, including some of the groups mentioned here.⁶⁵

⁶¹ *b. Ta'an.* 11a–b. A positive view of the Nazirite's asceticism is also provided in *Sifre Zuta* 6:8. Interestingly, Soloveitchik follows neither side of the classical rabbinic debate about the Nazirite. Rather, he denies outright that the Nazirite is an ascetic figure. See *UM*, 213.

⁶² See, e.g., the negative statement of R. Yitzhak concerning a *seudat reshut* (any meal not mandated as a mitzvah) in *b. Pesah.* 49a; *b. 'Abot* 6:4, which recommends a life of physical deprivation focused on the study of the Torah; the statement of R. Judah HaNasi in *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* ch. 28 that the pleasures of the world to come are granted only to one who rejects the pleasures of this world. Ancient Judaism also included some ascetic groups at the margins, e.g., the Essenes and the Therapeutae. Asceticism is also a major theme in the writings of Philo. A frequently cited scholarly debate concerning asceticism in rabbinic Judaism is that between Yitzhak Fritz Baer, *Israel Among the Nations* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1955) chs. 2–3, and Ephraim E. Urbach, "Asceticism and Suffering in Talmudic and Midrashic Sources," (Hebrew) in *Yitzhak F. Baer Jubilee Volume* (ed. Salo W. Baron, Ben Zion Dinur, Samuel Ettinger and Israel Halpern; Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1960) 48–68. As Fraade has pointed out (Steven D. Fraade, "Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism," in *Jewish Spirituality from the Bible through the Middle Ages* [ed. Arthur Green; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986] 253–88), Baer and Urbach base their respective analyses on very different understandings of asceticism. It is Urbach's article that is more germane to the present discussion.

⁶³ For examples of ascetic statements in the writings of other medieval Jewish thinkers whose ideas, like R. Bahya's, were influenced to a greater or lesser extent by Sufism, see Moshe Z. Sokol, "Attitudes Toward Pleasure in Jewish Thought: A Typological Proposal," in *Reverence, Righteousness and Rahamanut: Essays in Memory of Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung* (ed. Jacob J. Schacter; Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1992) 297.

⁶⁴ See above, n. 34, for Soloveitchik's opposition to the Musar movement's negative stance towards this world.

⁶⁵ See Sokol, "Attitudes Toward Pleasure in Jewish Thought," 295–96. For a more detailed discussion, and references to the scholarly literature, concerning many of the ascetic trends mentioned in this paragraph, especially *mithnagdic* asceticism, see Nadler, *The Faith of the Mithnagdim*, ch. 4.

Maimonides, probably the most important post-Talmudic rabbinic thinker, famously wrestles with these opposing motifs in rabbinic tradition. In *The Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides, in a passage concerning the qualities of the prophet, forcefully expresses his disdain for the

bestial things—I mean the preference for the pleasures of eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and, in general, of the sense of touch, with regard to which Aristotle gave a clear explanation in the “Ethics,” saying that this sense is a disgrace to us. How fine is what he said, and how true it is that it is a disgrace! For we have it in so far as we are animals like other beasts, and nothing that belongs to the notion of humanity pertains to it.⁶⁶

In other works, however, Maimonides makes some statements that are far less sympathetic to asceticism. In his great legal code, the *Mishneh Torah*, he writes:

Perhaps a person may say: “Since envy, lust, honour and the like constitute an evil path . . . I shall separate myself from them extremely and distance myself as far as possible,” so that he goes so far as not eating meat, drinking wine, marrying, living in a pleasant home, or wearing proper clothing, but rather [wears] sackcloth, coarse wool and the like as do the idolatrous priests—this too is a bad path and it is forbidden to follow it. One who follows such a path is termed a sinner. . . . Therefore the Sages commanded that a person refrain only from things which the Torah has withheld from him . . . and concerning all these things and their like, Solomon commanded: “Do not be righteous overmuch.”⁶⁷

It is clear from the continuation of Maimonides’s discussion in *De’ot* 3:2 and 3:3 that he does not consider eating, drinking, sexual relations, etc., to be valuable *per se*, but rather emphasizes their importance because they are necessary conditions of good health, which in turn is a pre-requisite of the intellectual contemplation necessary to know God. Nevertheless, the *Hilkhot De’ot* passage is not obviously reconcilable with the pro-ascetic sentiments expressed in the *Guide*.⁶⁸ Maimonides also strongly

⁶⁶ Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (trans. S. Pines; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) part 2: chapter 36, page 371. Maimonides repeats his citation of Aristotle’s disdain for the sense of touch in several other places in the *Guide*: see 2:40, 384; 3:8, 432; and 3:49, 608. See also Maimonides’s ascetic first rationale for circumcision at 3:49, 609, and his remarks concerning eating, drinking and sex at 3:8, 434.

⁶⁷ *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot De’ot*, 3:1. The translation is our own.

⁶⁸ In his Introduction to his translation of the *Guide* (lxii), Pines writes of Maimonides that “qua philosopher, though not qua teacher of the halakhah, he favored asceticism.” Isadore Twersky, (*Introduction to the Code of Maimonides [Mishneh Torah]* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1980] 464–65) endorses this judgement and adds instructively: “Halakhah, which is antiascetic, imposes certain inescapable constraints, but what we are dealing with is divergent emphasis rather than contradiction.” However, even when writing in halakhic mode, Maimonides sometimes gives expression to ascetic sentiments: see, e.g., Maimonides’s characterisation of the body at the end of *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Teshuva*, 8:2. Significantly, despite the ambivalence of the Maimonidean texts, Aharon Lichtenstein has recently noted that Soloveitchik attempts to enlist Maimonides as a supporter of anti-asceticism. See Aharon Lichtenstein, “Of Marriage: Relationship and Relations,” *Tradition* 39 (2005) 7–35, at 30.

opposes asceticism (beyond what is involved in observing the commandments of the Torah) in Chapter 4 of the *Eight Chapters*, where, *inter alia*, he criticizes those who believe that through ascetic practices they will become closer to God, “as if the Holy One, blessed be He, hates the body and desires its destruction.”⁶⁹

This brief overview of traditional sources shows that Soloveitchik has chosen to emphasize one strand of the tradition at the expense of the other. Moreover, Soloveitchik articulates his perspective in unusually bold, sometimes almost Nietzschean terms. It seems to us likely that the emphasis on this-worldliness, life-affirmation, and anti-asceticism characteristic of modernity and represented by Nietzsche’s views determined to a significant extent the adoption and development by Soloveitchik, a modern Orthodox thinker, of the anti-ascetic as opposed to the ascetic motif in earlier Jewish thought.

■ Repentance

We now turn to the topic of repentance. The focus of the high holy days and a central motif in their liturgy, repentance affords us a window on a whole cluster of Jewish theological concepts which Nietzsche held in contempt: sin, guilt, punishment, and the afterlife. We will begin this part by discussing the most influential Jewish view of repentance in the medieval period, one that would vindicate Nietzsche’s critique of religion. Next, we will show that Soloveitchik forges a conception of repentance that mirrors his general anti-asceticism and life-affirming *Weltanschauung*, thus sidestepping the Nietzschean critique of traditional religious teaching concerning these themes. Finally, we will demonstrate that Soloveitchik’s view, in fact, echoes prevalent readings of Nietzsche’s famous doctrine of Eternal Return.

Repentance in Traditional Jewish Thought

Nietzsche’s distaste for religious world-views that obsess over guilt and atonement is a theme that runs throughout his writings. Thus, for example, in the *Genealogy of Morals*, we find that man

has seized upon the presupposition of religion so as to drive his self-torture to its most gruesome pitch of severity and rigor. Guilt before *God*: this thought becomes an instrument of torture to him. . . . In this psychical cruelty there resides a madness of the will which is absolutely unexampled: the *will* of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ The translation is ours, from the Hebrew edition of Maimonides’s introductions to his commentary to the Mishna, *Hakdamot LePerush HaMishna* (ed. Mordekhai D. Rabinowitz; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1961) 176. For a detailed and nuanced discussion of Maimonides’s views on asceticism, particularly in the *Mishneh Torah* and the *Eight Chapters*, see Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides*, 459–68.

⁷⁰ *GM* 2, §22.

But such an approach would appear to be prevalent in medieval Jewish thought, as can be seen from a brief analysis of one of the most influential medieval discussions of repentance, namely Rabbi Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi's (1180–1263) *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (The Gates of Repentance).⁷¹

Though the concept of repentance is explicitly present in both biblical and early rabbinic literature, where its power and importance are recurrent themes,⁷² we find only schematic descriptions of the mechanics of repentance; it is only in medieval times that we find a detailed and systematic theology of repentance being formed. The topic of repentance is taken up in such well-known works as Saadia Gaon's *Emunot V'Deot* (The Book of Beliefs and Opinions) and Bahya's aforementioned *Hovot Halevavot*. R. Jonah's *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, however, is dedicated in its entirety to developing a consistent theology of repentance.

In the "First Gate" of *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, R. Jonah discusses the twenty principles of repentance. The general tone is set in the elucidation of the third principle—*da'agah* (sorrow)—where we are told that "the levels and degrees of repentance correspond to the magnitude of bitterness and the intensity of sorrow."⁷³ Sorrow over the acts one has already committed is compounded by the fifth principle of worry over the consequences of one's action, a principle that appears inexhaustible for R. Jonah such that one is never sure whether or not one has worried sufficiently to atone for one's sin:

Sorrow pertains to the past and worry to the future. He must worry too, lest he has fallen short in repentance; in suffering, bitterness, fasting and weeping. And although he may have suffered and wept much, he must tremble and fear that he may have sinned over and against this and that with all of his suffering, weeping and fasting, he has not paid his debt.⁷⁴

In R. Jonah's work, suffering is the primary focus and serves the purpose of instilling the fear of heaven into the sinner. Though he does, like Soloveitchik, write

⁷¹ For more on *Sha'arei Teshuvah*'s influence see Israel Ta-Shma, "Hasidut Ashkenaz bi-Sefarad: Rabbeinu Yonah Gerondi – ha-ish u-fo'olo," (Hebrew) in *Galut ahar golah: mekharim be-toledot Yisra'el muggashim le-Professor Hayim Bainart li-melot lo shiv'im shanah* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1988) 165–94, esp. 182–84.

⁷² For example, repentance is given foundational status when listed as one of the seven things created before the creation of the world (*b. Pesah* 54a); there appears to be an assumption that *talmidei hakhamim* repented every night for any sins committed (*b. Ber.* 19a); and the greatness of repentance is explicated at some length at *b. Yoma* 86a–b, where it is said to heal the world and bring near the redemption, to mention just two of many functions presented there. As Urbach writes, the rabbis extol repentance with "extravagant praise"; Ephraim Urbach, "Redemption and Repentance in Talmudic Judaism," in *Collected Writings in Jewish Studies* (ed. Robert Brody and Moshe D. Herr; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999) 264–80, at 278.

⁷³ R. Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi, *The Gates of Repentance* (trans. Shraga Silverstein; Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1967) Gate 1: chapter 13, page 21. Hereafter *ST*, followed by Gate, chapter, and page numbers.

⁷⁴ *ST* 1:16, 23–24.

of man's suffering serving "lofty purposes,"⁷⁵ the fact remains that in R. Jonah's work suffering is almost celebrated as a form of penance for one's sin, and the sinner is encouraged to drive his or her sorrow and worry to ever greater depths.

On this foundation, R. Jonah constructs a view of repentance that is a mirror image of the Nietzschean critique. The links among sin, guilt and punishment, for example, are a constant thread that runs throughout the entire work. Almost half of the Second Gate, entitled "To Teach the Ways by Which One May Awaken Himself to Return to God" deals with the connections among these various ideas. Thus, R. Jonah counsels reflection on the punishments incurred as the means of driving home the gravity of one's situation—the longest section of the book, the "Third Gate," is entitled "The Stringency of *Mitzvot*, the Exhortations, and the Different Kinds of Punishments."

He must investigate, know, and recognize the magnitude of the punishment for each of his transgressions . . . so that he may be aware of the greatness of his sin when he confesses it.⁷⁶

But along with the stick of punishment comes the potential carrot of the afterlife. Of course the afterlife, as the stage for the ultimate judgement of death, itself acts as a stick, impelling one to repent for fear of the repercussions of not doing so, and R. Jonah's work talks at length about this final judgement on the day of one's death. Failure to hold the day of one's death constantly in mind betrays, in R. Jonah's mind, an animal-like inability to grasp the concept of delayed gratification:

There are those who are not impelled by the thought of death to lay up provisions for the way or to correct their deeds, and into whose hearts the thought of their day of death does not enter until its arrival. They are likened to beasts.⁷⁷

Should one succeed in holding this vision constantly before the mind's eye, though, thus providing the motive to repent, the moment of death will be transformed and paradoxically become the crowning glory of one's life in the reward it heralds for the penitent man.

The tendency of such an otherworldly fixation to lead to a devaluation of this world in favour of the next is the final piece in the anti-Nietzschean jigsaw:

[O]ne who wishes his day of death to lead to eternal life will resolve within himself that since he is destined to leave the earth and his bodily desires and, in the end, to despise and abjure them, he will abandon them in his lifetime

⁷⁵ ST 2:4, 77.

⁷⁶ ST 1:37, 51. Bahya also advises that "fear of God's speedy punishment" is a condition of remorse, together with the "weeping, wailing and crying" that R. Jonah discusses under the conditions of sorrow and worry. See Bahya Ben Joseph Ibn Pakuda, *The Book of Direction to the Duties of the Heart* (trans. Menahem Mansoor; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) 335–36.

⁷⁷ ST 2:17, 99.

and make use of the earth only in the service of the exalted God. Then, his day of death will lead to life without end.⁷⁸

For death, too, is good in that it humbles spirits, causes hearts to fear God, and acts against one's coming to regard this world as uppermost.⁷⁹

In summary, the sinner, guilty before God, must engage in a level of soul-searching that constitutes extreme mental self-mortification, driving ever onwards to greater levels of psychological torment through meditation on the terrible punishments that await. Ignoring the evil temptations of physical desire in this world and meditating instead on death in which this ultimate judgement might be meted out is the primary method of saving our souls and propelling us towards those levels of repentance, that, should we achieve them and thus avoid punishment, will enable us to enjoy death's great gifts to the full.

Soloveitchik's View

Soloveitchik's conception of repentance is a particular application of his more general life-affirming *Weltanschauung* outlined earlier, as is immediately apparent from his headline definition of the term:

Repentance is not "remorse" or "acknowledgement" and does not depend upon depression or a sense of despair. Repentance is "return," "restoration."⁸⁰

As Lawrence Kaplan notes, his view of repentance "reflects and expresses his basic religious sensibility and outlook."⁸¹

Soloveitchik's first written formulation of his view can be found in *Halakhic Man*.⁸² In this work, repentance is primarily associated with the concept of creativity, a prominent theme in his thought more generally. For Soloveitchik, "repentance, according to the halakhic view, is an act of creation—self-creation."⁸³ This creative emphasis remains in the fore of his writings, including the later collection of his

⁷⁸ *ST* 2:17, 103.

⁷⁹ *ST* 2:25, 113.

⁸⁰ Pinchas Peli, *On Repentance: The Thought and Oral Discourses of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1984) 93. Hereafter *OR*, followed by page number.

⁸¹ Lawrence Kaplan, "Hermann Cohen and Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik on Repentance," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 13 (2004) 213–58, at 241. We are grateful to Professor Kaplan for allowing us to see this article prior to publication. Pinchas Peli has also written that Soloveitchik's Repentant Man "may be legitimately viewed as inhabiting the highest rung of [Soloveitchik's] typological ladder"; see Pinchas Peli, "Repentant Man—A High Level in Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's Typology of Man," repr. in *Exploring the Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (ed. Marc D. Angel; Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1997) 229–59, at 230. Our selective presentation is geared towards the particular argument of this paper; further analysis of Soloveitchik's view can be found in these two articles.

⁸² The year following *HM*'s original publication in Hebrew in 1944 saw the appearance of similar brief reflections on repentance in the original *SP*.

⁸³ *HM*, 110.

annual lectures, transcribed and published by Pinchas Peli as *On Repentance*, in which Soloveitchik presents a whole plethora of overlapping but non-identical categories of repentance. Though not always consistent to the letter, nonetheless, as Kaplan has argued, the view “presented from the 1940s to the late 1960s is, despite minor variations and inconsistencies, very closely knit and forms a coherent whole.”⁸⁴

Reflecting his fundamental methodological starting point that Jewish philosophy can only be fashioned from within, via the descriptive reconstruction of the ideas that lie at the foundation of its central halakhic texts, Soloveitchik’s view is drawn from an analysis of Maimonides “Laws of Repentance.” Without entering into the details of the analysis, in *Halakhic Man* this yields two aspects of repentance—atonement (*kapparah*) and purification (*taharah*), which are linked in turn to the dual effects of sin.

To an extent, Soloveitchik reaffirms the link between sin and punishment. When one sins, one has incurred a debt to be paid through punishment, a debt that needs to be cancelled out in order for the punishment to be avoided. Repentance therefore acts as a form of atonement like any other that leads to absolution or acquittal from punishment. This traditional motif is given greater emphasis in *On Repentance*, where we are told

No sin goes without its retribution, whether it be meted out by a terrestrial or a celestial court. The belief in reward and punishment is fundamental to Jewish belief.⁸⁵

This is the central focus for the *homo religiosus* of *Halakhic Man*, who “views repentance only from the perspective of atonement, only as a guard against punishment, as an empty regret which does not create anything, does not bring into being anything new.”⁸⁶ Moreover, this type of repentance, whereby one is throwing oneself on the mercy of a God who is not obliged to forgive one’s sin, can only be seen as “a wholly miraculous phenomenon made possible by the grace of the Almighty.”⁸⁷ This idea that repentance is, as Bahya Ibn Pakuda writes, “God’s special favour,”⁸⁸ recalls one of Nietzsche’s great concerns, that religion had “debased the concept ‘man’; its ultimate consequence is that everything good, great, true is superhuman and bestowed only through an act of grace.”⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Kaplan, “Hermann Cohen and Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik,” 258. Kaplan usefully tabulates the various different concepts and categories in order to draw the connections that exist among them at 223.

⁸⁵ *OR*, 50.

⁸⁶ *HM*, 112.

⁸⁷ *HM*, 113.

⁸⁸ Bahya, *Book of Directions of the Duties of the Heart*, 329. The central role of grace is explicit in Bahya’s discussion.

⁸⁹ *WP* §136.

However, Soloveitchik writes that “Spinoza . . . and Nietzsche . . . from this perspective—did well to deride the idea of repentance.”⁹⁰ For despite its prominence in much previous Jewish writing, ultimately in *Halakhic Man*, Soloveitchik’s attitude towards such repentance is little short of hostile, though his attitude towards this “repentance out of fear” is more temperate in *On Repentance*, where it has a role to play, albeit inferior to that of “repentance out of love.”

In contrast, Soloveitchik’s “halakhic” definition of repentance reflects “the most fundamental principle of all . . . that man must create himself,” an idea that in Soloveitchik’s view, “Judaism introduced into the world.”⁹¹ This concept of repentance as an act of self-creation is linked to the second aspect of sin—that it has a defiling quality leading to a metaphysical change in the status of the person who has sinned, and thus becomes a *rasha*, a wicked person. Repentance, on this account, purifies man, enabling a change of status back to spiritual wholesomeness.

This idea of purification, which is “far superior to absolution,”⁹² is not motivated by fear or meditation on punishment, nor by reference to any otherworldly rewards. Indeed, the discussion of repentance found in *Halakhic Man* does not contain a single reference to the afterlife, and punishment is only mentioned in relation to the object of his criticism—the “peripheral”⁹³ atonement aspect. Even the more traditional *On Repentance* pays it very little attention. Indeed, in the discussion of the higher process of purification found there, the defilement of sin is “not a form of punishment, or a fine, and is not imposed in a spirit of anger, wrath or vindictiveness.”⁹⁴ With repentance of purification, “sin is its own true punishment.”⁹⁵ Thus the more traditional assertion cited above that “no sin goes without its retribution” reflects the perspective taken by the *homo religious*. For halakhic man, however, sin and punishment are here understood in a more naturalistic vein.

Returning to the afterlife, other than the reference to possible punishment in a celestial court cited earlier, out of over three hundred pages in *On Repentance*, there is only a single two-page section entitled “The Resurrection of the Dead and the Immortality of the Soul.”⁹⁶ Even in this section though, the discussion of the soul simply posits an inner core element, said to be its immortal aspect, which acts as the substantial self that anchors personal identity and allows a person to shed his or her sinner’s personality whilst remaining the same penitent person. In marked contrast to the traditional emphasis on punishment, death and the afterlife in discussions of repentance, these concepts therefore play no *motivational* role in Soloveitchik’s penitential economy.

⁹⁰ *HM*, 114.

⁹¹ *HM*, 109.

⁹² *SP*, 30.

⁹³ Soloveitchik’s term. See *HM*, 112.

⁹⁴ *OR*, 52.

⁹⁵ *OR*, 64.

⁹⁶ *OR*, 184–86.

For Soloveitchik, purification, as essentially an act of creation, is effected without reference to anything other than man's creative capacities. A creative act initiated by man, this form of repentance is also completed by man. The feeling of defilement elicits a need to create a new "I," and this act of creation is itself the act of repentance. There is no need for recourse to a forgiving God since in this form of repentance the sinner is not throwing himself on God's mercy out of fear, but is rather attempting to effect a change in his own status. It is what Soloveitchik will later term, in *On Repentance*, repentance out of love, which he believes corresponds to Maimonides's perfect repentance performed out of free choice. This repentance is something that is achieved, not granted. As Soloveitchik puts it, "the act is not supernatural but psychological."⁹⁷ Thus, Soloveitchik's penitent man does not look heavenwards for an act of grace, nor does he dwell on either the rewards or punishments of some speculative afterlife in order to wallow in his own sinfulness.

Nonetheless, purification involves remorse and shame over one's sin. One feels "self-degradation and abnegation"⁹⁸ in acknowledging one's sin, and Soloveitchik certainly believes in a tortuous struggle of the soul as a necessary component of the process of purification, a process that demands extreme self-sacrifice. Purification cannot be procured by anything other than the suffering of genuine personal repentance.⁹⁹ Thus, Soloveitchik does "seize upon the presupposition of religion" and has a concept of sin that includes guilt before God and suffering on account of it.¹⁰⁰ And yet, whilst Soloveitchik does not dismiss the element of struggle and suffering in repentance—on the contrary, conflict and struggle are essential components of his world view—in purification these elements are not connected to fear of punishment or the afterlife. Instead, suffering plays a crucial role in the economy of repentance as the springboard for the creative gesture at its centre.

⁹⁷ *SP*, 28. Blau, who points out Soloveitchik's debt to Max Scheler, similarly notes how "the Schelerian understanding of repentance shifts the focus from God's activity to that of man." Yitzchak Blau, "Creative Repentance: On Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's Concept of Teshuvah," repr. in *Exploring the Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (ed. Marc D. Angel; Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1997) 263–74, at 270.

⁹⁸ *OR*, 239.

⁹⁹ *OR*, 52–53

¹⁰⁰ Worthy of note, and deserving of further analysis, is Soloveitchik's definition of the feelings of disgust at one's sin as aesthetic in nature rather than moral or religious: "The feeling generated by sin is not a moral sensation; the moral sense in man is not such a powerful force . . . the feeling of sin which drags a person to repentance is an aesthetic sensation" (*OR*, 197). Soloveitchik's attitude towards the aesthetic is complex and ambivalent, and in an interesting article, Zachary Braiterman has argued for an aesthetic appreciation of mitzvah that can be drawn from Soloveitchik's writings. Braiterman characterizes his interpretation as a misreading, but one for which Soloveitchik himself provides the basis. In our opinion, Soloveitchik's writings on repentance provide further support for such a picture and perhaps even indicate that it is less of a misreading than Braiterman thinks. See Zachary Braiterman, "Joseph Soloveitchik and Immanuel Kant's Mitzvah-Aesthetic," *AJS Review* 25 (2000/2001) 1–24.

It is the struggle with one's sin and its elevation that is central to achieving the highest form of repentance. For Soloveitchik, however, the focus is on what Peli terms the "constructive value of suffering which purifies man and refines and sanctifies him."¹⁰¹ Much like Nietzsche, suffering is salutary: Soloveitchik's repentant man is elevated by his suffering to the peak of religious achievement. As Peli notes:

If suffering creates, enobles and toughens, and brings the soul nearer to the object of its yearning, then "Repentant Man" is the type which comes closest to attaining man's goal, for his conception and maturation owe everything to suffering.¹⁰²

Soloveitchik thus places Golomb's "patterns of positive power" at the centre of his philosophy of repentance, though it is in Soloveitchik's discussion of the dynamics of repentance out of love that his view becomes most Nietzschean.

A Nietzschean Perspective: Eternal Return and Repentance of Love

First encountered in *The Gay Science's* "The Greatest Weight," Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Return is put into the mouth of a demon who presents us with the following thought:

This life, as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence.¹⁰³

There are those who take eternal recurrence seriously as a cosmological thesis and subject Nietzsche's unpublished proofs of the theory¹⁰⁴ to serious analytical dissection.¹⁰⁵ Without denying the possibility of a literal interpretation, its greater significance seems to us to be found in a non-literal interpretation of the doctrine

¹⁰¹ *OR*, 202. This is said in relation to what Soloveitchik terms emotional rather than intellectual repentance. Though in this case Soloveitchik himself does not adjudge their relative status in the repentance hierarchy (see *OR*, 206), and notably this pairing is missing from Kaplan's table, for Peli it is emotional repentance, identified as repentance out of love, that is the greater, with intellectual repentance categorized as repentance out of fear (Peli, "Repentant Man," 235–27). Nonetheless, during the discussion of intellectual repentance we are told that the intellect agrees that sin is attractive and therefore leads to a "strenuous battle of the will" (*OR*, 206). It appears that Peli's general summation cited below in the main text is therefore apt for both forms of repentance.

¹⁰² *OR*, 14.

¹⁰³ *GS* §341.

¹⁰⁴ Though some saw the light of day in *WP* §1053–1067.

¹⁰⁵ For examples of such views, see Arthur Danto, "The Eternal Recurrence," in *Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays* (ed. Robert Solomon: Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973) 316–21; Ivan Soll, "Reflections on Recurrence," in *ibid.*, 322–42; Arnold Zuboff, "Nietzsche and Eternal Recurrence," in *ibid.*, 343–57; Bernd Magnus, *Nietzsche's Existential Imperative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978); and Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, ch. 5. Neither Magnus nor Nehamas accept such a reading though.

on which the demon does not simply teach a cosmological theory, if indeed he does that at all. The stress both in this passage and in many of the presentations of the doctrine in *Zarathustra* is on one's *reaction* to the demon's idea. Nietzsche's demon confronts one with the question of whether one would "gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus?" or would answer "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine."¹⁰⁶ It is unclear why we would react so violently to Eternal Return as a purely cosmological thesis. Given our blissful ignorance of all that will occur in our life despite its supposed repetition, such a theory is likely to leave us unmoved.¹⁰⁷

Indeed, a non-literal view of eternal recurrence, in varying forms, appears ever more the norm. Thus, for Bernd Magnus the doctrine in fact "is a visual and conceptual representation of a particular attitude towards life,"¹⁰⁸ whilst for Nehamas it ultimately presents a view of the self.¹⁰⁹ Weaver Santaniello makes more of the quasi-religious nature of the doctrine in her assertion that Nietzsche's concept of Eternal Return is his replacement for the Christian concept of redemption and individual immortality, while in a detailed rereading of the central texts, Alan White argues that the key to understanding Eternal Return is found in the references to Zarathustra's soul.¹¹⁰ In a similar vein, Kathleen Higgins argues that eternal recurrence is specifically aimed against the Christian doctrine of sin.¹¹¹ Not only does the non-literal interpretation of eternal recurrence seem to us the most convincing reading of Nietzsche, but by reading the doctrine in this light, we find marked parallels with Soloveitchik's highest form of repentance.

At the most basic level, linguistic parallels with Nietzsche's doctrine abound. We have already noted Soloveitchik's identification of repentance with the idea of return. The cyclical picture of time that Nietzsche paints also recalls the very etymological significance of the term "repentance" for Soloveitchik, which "bears the connotation of completing a circle . . . repentance signifies circular motion."¹¹² But in order to understand how Soloveitchik's repentance corresponds to eternal recurrence, let us turn to Nietzsche's doctrine itself and its most sustained treatment in *Zarathustra*, where the quasi-religious nature of his writing is most explicit.

¹⁰⁶ GS §341.

¹⁰⁷ This response of indifference is made by Soll as a critique of Nietzsche's position (Soll, "Reflections on Recurrence," 339), and by Higgins as an argument for her non-literal reading of the doctrine (Higgins, *Reading Zarathustra*, 163–64). See also Alan White, *Within Nietzsche's Labyrinth* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990) ch. 5.

¹⁰⁸ Magnus, *Nietzsche's Existential Imperative*, 142.

¹⁰⁹ See Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, ch. 5.

¹¹⁰ See Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God and the Jews*, 83 and White, *Within Nietzsche's Labyrinth*, ch. 6.

¹¹¹ See Kathleen Marie Higgins, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987) ch. 6.

¹¹² OR, 89.

In "On Redemption," Nietzsche describes the most profound form of vengeance against the passage of time: "'It was'—that is the name of the will's gnashing of teeth and most secret melancholy. Powerless against what has been done, he is an angry spectator of all that is past . . . 'that which was' is the name of the stone he cannot move."¹¹³ Nietzsche here presents an attitude towards the past whereby we are helpless and passive spectators with respect to what has happened or has been done. And on such a view therefore, each sin makes an indelible mark on the self that the passage of time ingrains into the very fabric of our being, provoking our disgust with the self as an irredeemable sinner deserving of eternal punishment. Such is the view taken by Zarathustra's Pale Criminal who "always saw himself as the doer of one deed," and as such "the lead of his guilt lies upon him."¹¹⁴

This is what Soloveitchik's *homo religiosus* "understands" when viewing repentance solely as a guard against punishment for the sin that has been committed and can never be wiped out. On what Soloveitchik, following Max Scheler,¹¹⁵ terms the quantitative view of time, whereby past and future "are connected with one another and with the present only through the law of causality,"¹¹⁶ the past is over once and for all, irretrievably lost, and thus "the erasure of man's sins is, from the rational standpoint, incomprehensible."¹¹⁷ What is done is done, and since one cannot do anything to change it, all one can do is throw oneself on God's mercy, leading one to the view of repentance that Soloveitchik so derides in his earlier work.¹¹⁸ And Zarathustra's reaction to this? "Madness I call this: the exception now becomes the essence for him."¹¹⁹

For Soloveitchik, though madness might be too strong a word, the psychological harm caused by such an approach is a central concern, for redemption, according to this view, can only be gained at the price of excision. The repentance out of fear, in which one does gnash one's teeth against the sinner one has essentially become, involves ridding oneself of the mark of sin, and thus the punishment it entails, by excising that period from one's life entirely. Such repentance out of fear in which sin is blotted out, though possible, can cause estrangement from ties formed during that period and means that the sinner's "past shrinks and his personality is dwarfed."¹²⁰

¹¹³ Z 2, §20.

¹¹⁴ Z 1, §6.

¹¹⁵ See Blau, "Creative Repentance" and Kaplan, "Hermann Cohen and Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik."

¹¹⁶ *HM*, 114.

¹¹⁷ *SP*, 27.

¹¹⁸ This is precisely the sort of Christian doctrine that is the object of Nietzsche's critique according to Higgins, who gives an excellent summary of the view in which sin "indelibly marks [the sinner] as one who deserves punishment . . . except for God's mercy, the sins we commit would doom us to eternal torture in hell." Higgins, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, 167.

¹¹⁹ Z 1, §6.

¹²⁰ *OR*, 250. It is interesting that despite his very different approach to repentance, Bahya actually also privileges repentance out of "man's strong understanding of his Lord" over repentance "when

It is this perspective that garners reactions of horror at eternal recurrence. A traditional religious conception of time treats time in a linear, quantitative fashion, leading up to a final judgement by God. According to such a conception, one is bound to be cast as a sinner, for no human can go through life without sin, and this sin can be redeemed only by the grace of God at the end of time. For one holding such beliefs, the endless sequential repetition of eternal recurrence symbolizes a world without meaning and purpose and without the possibility of redemption by God at some end-point. At the most basic level, therefore, rejecting eternal recurrence is a rejection of the world it depicts, a world devoid of a God and an afterlife that would supposedly give our lives purpose. Thus the "truth" of the picture is indeed "abysmal" for those of a certain disposition, as Zarathustra recognizes. Yet the "meaning" that is embodied in the abhorrence of this eternal recurrence and clinging instead to the linear conception of time represents the sickness, weakness, and general life-denying views that both Nietzsche and Soloveitchik criticize.

What then is the alternative? How can eternal recurrence be embraced? It will be instructive to look first at Nehamas's view for important parallels with and ultimately contrasts to Soloveitchik. For Nehamas, Eternal Return asserts the following conditional—"if my life were to recur, then it could recur only in identical fashion,"¹²¹ which is explained by reference to the view of the self that ultimately, for Nehamas, is what Eternal Return teaches us. Rejecting the notion of the thing-in-itself in any form, Nietzsche rejects, as a particular instance of it, the idea of the substantial self, the unchanging substratum within which change occurs. A person for Nietzsche is simply the totality of his experiences and actions:

There is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming. "The doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything . . . our entire science still lies under the misleading influence of language and has not disposed of that little changeling, the "subject."¹²²

That being so, it follows that all properties of a person are equally "essential" to the "self" and therefore, if any of the properties of a person were different, the "subject," who is simply the totality of those properties, would have to be different too. Thus, if my life were to recur, it could only do so in identical fashion. Any change, and it would not be the repetition of *my* life. Moreover, given that for Nietzsche this holism applies beyond the self to the world in its entirety, the demon is therefore asking us to accept or reject the world in its entirety, since to want a single event to be different would be to want the whole to be different. It is this conception that Eternal Return presents in Nehamas's view, and this is why its acceptance is the ultimate symbol of life affirmation.

a man realizes God's trials and His severe punishment." See Bahya, *Book of Directions of the Duties of the Heart*, 339–40.

¹²¹ Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, 153.

¹²² *GM* 1, §13.

At first glance, this belief appears to reinforce the view of the Pale Criminal. If each act is essential to the self, I am therefore essentially defined by each act that I do. If I sin, I am a sinner and that is the final judgement. However, the other side of this holistic view is that if each act I perform is equally essential to the self that I am, the past ceases to assert its hegemony over the present and future. For on this view, as each act is equally part of the self, that “self” cannot be finally evaluated until it is seen in the context of the other elements of “the self” yet to come (i.e., one’s future acts). This, however, means that the idea of the Eternal Return represents an opportunity to reinterpret one’s past actions that are indeed essential to one’s “self,” but in light of the way that they holistically interact with the actions that one continues to do that are equally “essential.” This allows for the affirmation of one’s past actions in the context of the narrative that one forms in the continuing construction of the self. Of most significance for the theme of redemption alluded to earlier, if all one’s actions can be constantly reinterpreted in this way since they are all equally constitutive of the subject, affirming one’s present self is equivalent to affirming the past actions that are essential to it. One can redeem the past in light of the present and future. As Zarathustra states it:

I taught them to work on the future and to redeem with their creation all that *has been*. To redeem what is past in man and to re-create all “it was” until the will says, “Thus I willed it! Thus I shall will it”—this I called redemption and this alone I taught them to call redemption.¹²³

This ability to affirm the self who performs these past actions rather than blot it out is precisely what one finds in Soloveitchik’s highest form of repentance—repentance out of love. Thus, Soloveitchik writes that when one looks back at one’s sins, whether they are specific sins or a period of time in which one felt oneself immersed in sin, one has a choice. One can continue to identify with the person that committed the sins, or can attempt to blot out that period and thus not affirm the actions taken during it. Repentance out of love requires taking the former route, which rectifies and elevates the sin rather than blotting it out. Soloveitchik appeals in support of this view to the classic Talmudic dictum of Resh Lakish, whose statement “Great is repentance, for because of it, premeditated sins are accounted as errors,” is revised when speaking of repentance out of love to “Great is repentance, for premeditated sins are accounted as though they were merits.”¹²⁴

For Soloveitchik, the “negative” emotions and forces such as jealousy and hatred are dynamic and aggressive, unlike the largely static and passive “positive” forces such as love. As such, they must be retained, but sublimated in order to be positively channelled in the direction of self-creation. In repentance out of love Soloveitchik

¹²³ Z 3, §12.

¹²⁴ *b. Yoma* 86b.

explains: "He has not forgotten his sin—he must not forget it. Sin is the generating force, the springboard which pushes him higher and higher."¹²⁵

For Soloveitchik, therefore, rather than gnashing one's teeth at one's irredeemable past, "there are many different paths, according to this perspective, along which the cause can travel. It is the future that determines its direction and points the way."¹²⁶ In this way, man is able to affirm the Eternal Return of this life in its entirety and can thus embrace the demon's hypothesis, since it presents the opportunity for the creative reinterpretation of the self at the centre of Soloveitchik's view of repentance. For Nehamas, one is presented with the question of whether the self, which must eternally recur, in the sense that we cannot will it to be any different if it is to be "my" life, is one that one can affirm. A life-denying view, as represented by the linear perspective, would cause a highly negative reaction. But if one properly understands the self in this holistic fashion, with the cyclical structure that reveals the opportunity for re-creation, then one's reaction could be emphatically positive. One should note, though, that the thought might remain "abysmal" even at this level. Self-creation is no easy process for Soloveitchik, and as Nehamas correctly understands, neither is it for Nietzsche, who understands "how intense and painful a self examination is necessary"¹²⁷ for one to achieve this process without self-deception.

Soloveitchik's more traditional view of the soul actually precludes him from following Nehamas in his view of repentance. The non-substantial view of the self that Nehamas presents as the essence of Eternal Return is one that Soloveitchik does not accept,¹²⁸ despite the fact that Soloveitchik's substantial soul is little more than a featureless substratum for the self's real characteristics, thus embodying an understanding of substance that has been the object of sustained philosophical critique since the time of Leibniz and Locke. Soloveitchik bases his view instead on an interpretation of time that allows for the reinterpretation of our past actions. And significantly, though Nietzsche's view of the self is as Nehamas paints it, in interpreting the doctrine of Eternal Return, it plays the cart to the horse of time. As Higgins notes, "a number of Nietzsche's big themes come together in Zarathustra's doctrine."¹²⁹ But the confluence point that is Eternal Return reads more naturally to us as a perspective on time, engendering life-affirmation through "reconciliation with time."¹³⁰

¹²⁵ OR, 261. Similarly, "He strives to convert his sin into a spiritual springboard for increased inspiration and evaluation" (SP, 28).

¹²⁶ HM, 115.

¹²⁷ Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, 163.

¹²⁸ And is also, according to the Kaplan, one of the underlying reasons for certain differences between Soloveitchik's view of repentance and that of Cohen. See Kaplan, "Hermann Cohen and Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik," 246–47.

¹²⁹ Higgins, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, 188.

¹³⁰ Z 2, §20.

Though Eternal Return is presented as the idea that the content of time recurs eternally, Zarathustra's presentation of the theory is also, as Alan White has noted, a statement about the form of time.¹³¹ Thus, in revealing his abysmal thought to the dwarf in "Of the Vision and the Riddle," Zarathustra tells us

"Behold this gateway, dwarf!" I continued. "It has two faces. Two paths meet here; no one has yet followed either to its end. This long lane stretches back for an eternity. And the long lane out there, that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these paths; they offend each other face to face; and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed above: 'Moment.' But whoever would follow one of them, on and on, farther and farther—do you believe, dwarf, that these paths contradict each other eternally?"¹³²

The idea presented here is that each moment is symbolic of an eternity inasmuch as it is inextricably linked with the entire past and especially the future. As Zarathustra immediately goes on to say, "are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it *all* that is to come?"¹³³ But it is this view of the moment, as a gateway to the future and the past, that allows for the constant interaction between these three temporal qualifiers. It is the idea that the past is not dead, since it is linked to the present and future, that Soloveitchik uses in his appropriation of Scheler's qualitative view of time. And it is this that allows the sinner to view the past as a living past that can continue to be affected by the future. As Soloveitchik puts it:

Both "cause" and "effect" appear in active-passive "garb"; both act and are acted upon; each influences and is influenced by the other. The future imprints its stamp on the past and determines its image.¹³⁴

For Higgins, this "present centeredness," as she terms it, is Nietzsche's central point: "the causal connectedness of past, present, and future is the precondition of the present moment's *potency* in the time series."¹³⁵ And Soloveitchik, in constantly emphasizing the *future* orientation that the present mediates, argues similarly that past and future "act and create in the heart of the present and shape the very image of reality."¹³⁶ One cannot literally undo the past, but according to this view one can affirm one's past through the constant reinterpretation that the cyclical qualitative perspective on time allows.¹³⁷

¹³¹ White, *Within Nietzsche's Labyrinth*, 88.

¹³² Z 3, §2.

¹³³ Z 3, §2.

¹³⁴ *HM*, 115.

¹³⁵ Higgins, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, 177.

¹³⁶ *HM*, 114. According to Kaplan, it is in this future orientation that Soloveitchik differs from Scheler, for whom recalling the past itself is the method of transformation. See Kaplan, "Hermann Cohen and Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik," 236ff.

¹³⁷ This, White argues, is the essential idea of eternal return, leading him, as if quoting Soloveitchik,

According to this picture, what we affirm in blessing the demon is the eternal recurrence of the moment that embodies one's entire past and future at every step. The past and future eternally recur in "each" present in the opportunity afforded for their re-evaluation. And it is this attitude towards time that allows Soloveitchik to speak of reinterpreting one's past sinful acts and utilizing them positively rather than excising them from one's past. So for Soloveitchik, though there is a substantial inner "self" that preserves personal identity, the qualitative conception of time allows for the non-essential definition of the acts of that self that in turn facilitates the sinner's transformation of the sinful actions that clothe it. The fundamental idea is that the descriptions that attach to our past actions are constantly subject to reinterpretation in light of the future direction that we take. Soloveitchik can thus circumvent the more radical implications that Nietzschean holism would have for his traditional notion of the soul, and yet still reject the image of the pale criminal that one might expect it to yield and turn instead to his view of repentance as self-creation. Soloveitchik's repentant man thus appears in Zarathustran guise as "a willer, a creator, a future himself and a bridge to the future."¹³⁸ And thus repentance of love can act as Soloveitchik's highest formula of life-affirmation.

In the context of our focus on the Nietzschean critique of Judaeo-Christian religion, then, the overriding theme of Soloveitchik's view of repentance is his refusal to focus on guilt, punishment and the afterlife so as to devalue this world, substituting instead his insistence on a creative, this-worldly and future-oriented approach both to repentance and to religion in general. Our analysis shows how Soloveitchik is determined to move away from the entire thrust of R. Jonah's medieval classic. Views such as R. Jonah's were certainly not absent from the tradition in which Soloveitchik was raised and indeed the *mithnagdic* tradition in which he was reared reflects precisely the sort of other-worldliness and pessimism that characterizes R. Jonah's work.¹³⁹ This makes it all the more striking that Soloveitchik formulates a doctrine of repentance remarkable both in its Nietzschean tone and in its fundamental reshaping of the classical Jewish perspective.

■ Conclusion

In focusing on Nietzsche and Soloveitchik as representatives of modernity and modern Orthodoxy respectively, we have argued that Soloveitchik's perspective on this world, the passions, and repentance forges a distinctive theological path through Jewish tradition that not only parries Nietzsche's potent critique of Judeo-Christian religion but also resonates with some key Nietzschean concerns. While certainly rooted in traditional texts, Soloveitchik's position does not hesitate either to privilege some sources over others or to refashion traditional concepts. Thinkers

to argue that it is a vision of "resurrection as self creation" (White, *Within Nietzsche's Labyrinth*, 100). White's reading is actually startling in its similarity to Soloveitchik's view of repentance.

¹³⁸ Z 2, §20.

¹³⁹ See Allan Nadler, *The Faith of the Mithnagdim*.

like Soloveitchik thus develop their religious worldview in a manner that simply does not conform to Nietzsche's depiction of religion as a life-denying crutch for the weak and insipid. Rather, they write of a religion that is life-affirming and gives expression to many central Nietzschean "virtues" such as courage, creativity and the sublimation rather than extirpation of the passions.¹⁴⁰ Such attempts to appropriate modernist critiques of religion in the service of religion itself might be construed, to appropriate a further Nietzschean image, as having "made danger your vocation."¹⁴¹ Rather than turning in his grave, however, one hopes that, of all thinkers, Nietzsche might have enjoyed the irony.

¹⁴⁰ It is no surprise, therefore, that some of Soloveitchik's intellectual heirs have taken these life-affirming themes rather further than Soloveitchik himself would have been prepared to countenance. David Hartman, for example writes, "I am grateful that the secular spirit of the modern world has made the medieval option of fear and punishment spiritually irrelevant. . . . I never saw Judaism as necessarily weakened by the modern emphasis on the significance of the present or by people's indifference to or distaste for the terrifying descriptions of divine retribution awaiting the sinner." David Hartman, *A Living Covenant* (New York: The Free Press, 1985) 302.

¹⁴¹ Z, Prologue, §6.

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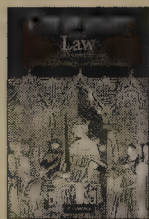
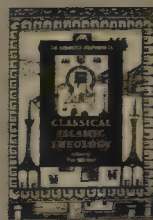


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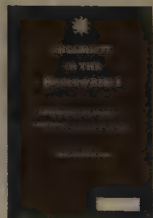


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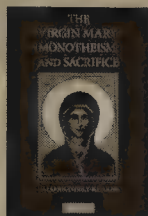
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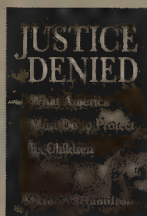
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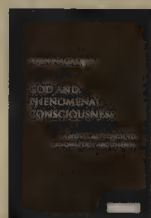


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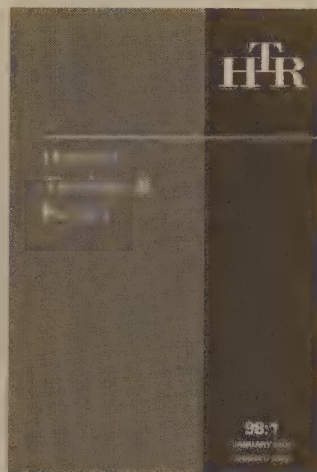
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Harvard Theological Review

EDITOR | **François Bovon**, *Harvard Divinity School, USA*

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Harvard Theological Review has been a central forum for scholars of religion and theology since its founding in 1908. It continues to publish compelling original research that contributes to the development of scholarly understanding and interpretation in the history and philosophy of religious thought in all traditions and periods - including the areas of Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Christianity, Jewish studies, archaeology, comparative religious studies, theology and ethics.

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CENTENNIAL ISSUE

1908–2008

François Bovon, Editor

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JULY-OCTOBER 2008

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HTR Centennial Celebration: Words of Welcome

William A. Graham, Dean
Harvard Divinity School

Good morning and welcome to all of you who have gathered on this extremely proud day for Harvard Divinity School to mark the centennial celebration of the *HTR*, the *Harvard Theological Review*.

I am honored to have been asked by our Editor, François Bovon, to begin the day by paying brief tribute to this trail-blazing publication in theological and religious studies, and especially in American theological and religious studies. Since its first print run in 1908, the *Review* has had a significant role in defining the ways in which essential religious questions are posed, analyzed, and taken in new and compelling directions in scholarship, both in this country and abroad.

However, we should not think today that this was, even in the beginning, a hundred years ago, an undertaking that had smooth sailing. One can glean something of that, I think, from the very first article in the inaugural *HTR* issue, 1:1, of January 1, 1908, which was written by Francis Peabody and entitled "The Call to Theology." In his very first paragraph, Peabody remarks that theology was not uncontested in society at large, however positively it might have been treated in the academy at the time:

The time may appear to many persons inopportune for the launching of a Journal of Theology. The tide of theological interest may seem to have ebbed so low as to leave no channel for such a venture; the profession of the ministry fails to win recruits; the queen of the sciences is deposed from her throne; critics are announcing the rout of the theological schools. The machinery of the churches, it is true, revolves with energy, but it does not seem to be geared into the wheels of the working world; and the deliberations of the theologians are frankly regarded by great numbers of people with indifference, if not with contempt. A distinguished railway president, on being informed that a promis-

ing youth had undertaken the study of theology, remarked, "Why does not so gifted a man devote himself to something that is real?"

These very first words of the first article of the new *HTR* indicate pretty clearly that there were obstacles, or perhaps challenges, that scholars could see in front of them as the *HTR* was founded (and to which Peabody and his colleagues evidently felt the new journal could respond). Of course, we know today that despite such social counter-currents, the *Review* and the field of theology did not after all wither away. The *HTR* set out to broaden, and indeed did broaden, the very definition of theological studies in the course of the past century. It did so in such a way as to help this field encompass critical aspects not only of normative theological thinking, but also, and indeed prominently so, of history, philosophy, ethics, sociology, economics, and education as they pertain to religion, and as they affect people of all faiths, around the world. The mission statement that appeared with that first issue of the *Review* signaled this ambitious reach, noting that the journal "...will endeavor to maintain a spirit at once catholic and scientific, in sympathy with the aims and activities of the Church, as well as with scholarly investigation."

Over the past 100 years, the *HTR* has certainly met these goals; and I think you would all agree that it has, in fact, far exceeded them. The publication's scholarly yet accessible articles have challenged students of theology and religion around the globe to change and deepen their understanding of many topics, from Hebrew Bible and New Testament and early archaeological findings to ethics, women's studies, and comparative religion.

It may be especially relevant for me as the current dean of the Divinity School, given the leading role that HDS has taken, for example, in Women's Studies in the past thirty-five years, to note that the *HTR* published articles by female scholars almost from the beginning. One could point especially to the article from *HTR* 4:4, in 1911, by Mary Whiton Calkins of Wellesley College, entitled "The Nature of Prayer." This paper had been given as a lecture at the Harvard Summer School of Theology in 1910. Calkins was Professor of Greek and a noted psychologist. She had studied and completed virtually perfect doctoral examinations at Harvard under William James and Hugo Munsterberg, but despite support from James and also Josiah Royce, two of the University's most distinguished scholars, Harvard had refused to grant her the doctorate. When offered instead a Ph.D. from Radcliffe, Calkins had turned it down. She went on, however, without a formal Harvard Ph.D. to become President of both the American Psychological Association (1905) and the American Philosophical Association in 1918. So the *HTR* was already out in front of its own institution in its early days!

I might also mention the readiness of the early *HTR* editors to reach beyond the confines of the western academy for authors: witness the early contribution, "Emerson from an Indian Point of View," by Herambachandra Maitra, Calcutta, India, in which the author comments as follows on an earlier Harvard Divinity School graduate of some renown:

Emerson appeals to the Oriental mind. He translates into the language of modern culture what was uttered by the sages of ancient India in the loftiest strains. He breathes a new life into our old faith, and he assures its stability and progress by incorporating with it [other] truths revealed or brought into prominence by the wider intellectual and ethical outlook of the modern spirit.

Over the years, the *HTR* has attracted contributions from a wide variety of prominent scholars from this continent and abroad: Karl Bornhausen (Marburg, 1914), Ernst von Dobschütz (Halle, 1913), and Ernst Troeltsch (Heidelberg, 1912—an article in memory of William James) are three early contributors of international fame. Later authors from various fields and disciplines include scholars such as W. D. Davies, H. A. R. Gibb, Bruce Metzger, George Lindbeck, Jürgen Moltmann, David Noel Friedman, E. P. Sanders, Paul Ricoeur, Paul Tillich, Victor Turner, Jonathan Z. Smith, and Martin Marty, not to mention the many Harvard scholars from FAS and HDS who have written over the decades, or still do write today, for the *HTR*.

François Bovon, our current editor and a frequent contributor himself to the *HTR*, has carried forward in exemplary fashion the long tradition of general scholarly excellence as well as the particularly prominent and excellent tradition of New Testament scholarly contributions to the *Review* in the past half-century. Like his predecessors, such as our distinguished emeritus colleague, Helmut Koester, who will be presenting a paper this morning, François has managed to continue and to improve a venerable publication on a limited budget and with remarkable resourcefulness for the last number of years. This has of course been possible to no small extent because of the remarkable editorial work of the indefatigable Margaret Studier and many of our own doctoral students, who continue to make this publication all that it is. I particularly congratulate François this morning, and I thank Margaret and her editors, as well Helmut and the many HDS faculty who have served on the editorial board and/or vetted article submissions for publication repeatedly and conscientiously.

I know that we shall all now enjoy the presentations and discussions to follow today; I hope also that everyone here will read through the special 100th anniversary double issue of the *Harvard Theological Review*—a wonderful publication scheduled to appear this coming fall and winter, and which will include today's papers. In addition, I encourage you to visit the online index on the *Harvard Theological Review* website when it goes "live." It will be a fantastic resource that lists every article published in the *Review* on a particular topic. It should be clear that we have much to look forward to from the *HTR*, as we help it enter its second century; we celebrate today not its conclusion, but rather only a notable milestone on what we hope and trust will be a much longer path to an even more distinguished future.

It is now my pleasure to introduce François Bovon, the Frothingham Professor of the History of Religion and my esteemed colleague—whom I admire greatly as a scholar and on whom I have constantly relied in many ways as a colleague since becoming dean (and he has never let me or his faculty colleagues down). It is a privilege to call him a friend and colleague and to be able to introduce him today.

HTR Centennial Anniversary: Greetings and Introduction

François Bovon, Editor
Harvard Divinity School

At the beginning of this ceremony I would like to express my gratitude to Dean William A. Graham for his ongoing interest in *Harvard Theological Review* and for his generosity in helping us to organize this Centennial Anniversary.

I am pleased to welcome you here to Harvard Divinity School, in that place where one hundred years ago some professors of this Faculty launched a new periodical, *Harvard Theological Review*. I express my welcome to you, Helmut Koester, former editor, to Bunn Thompson and Marianne Palmer Bonz, former managing editors, to the members of the editorial board, to the authors present here, to the copy editors, typesetters, proofreaders, and just readers over the years.

It is impossible to start without a thought and a prayer for Krister Stendahl, former editor of *HTR*, who is not able to participate due to his severe illness.¹

¹ Krister Stendahl passed away 15 April 2008, a few days after our centennial celebration of *HTR*. With the editorial board, the managing editor, and the staff of *HTR*, and with Krister Stendahl's family, I share grief and gratitude. Among his many activities, Krister served as editor of *HTR* for several years (1963–1974), and considered this task as an important part of his ministry. I would like to express my admiration and gratitude for his work during that period. He preserved the continuity of *HTR* in a time of many discontinuities. Among Krister's many gifts and achievements: he joined the Harvard Divinity School faculty in 1954, served as dean of HDS (1968–1979), became bishop of Stockholm (1984–1988), served as the first chaplain of HDS (1988–1991), and was the first Myra and Robert Kraft and Jacob Hiatt Distinguished Professor of Christian Studies at Brandeis University (1990–1993). He was an international leader who promoted women's ordination, gay and lesbian rights, and interfaith dialogue—especially Jewish-Christian relations. He served as the chair of the World Council of Churches' Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People. His major scholarly publications include *The School of St. Matthew* (1954, 1968), *The Bible and the Role of Women* (1966), *Holy Week* (1974), *What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches* (1975), *Paul Among the Jews and Gentiles* (1976), *Meanings* (1984, expanded 2d ed., 2008), *Energy for Life* (1990), *Final Account, or Paul's Letter to the Romans* (1993). For an extended bibliography, see *Christians among Jews and Gentiles: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg with George W. MacRae; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) [xiii]–xxviii.

I cannot start either without mentioning Dr. Margaret Studier, who has been the soul and the body, the Martha and the Mary of this event. My gratitude is immense toward her. She selected the room, the food, and the paper of the program, if not the arrangement of this room. She is also and first of all the indispensable present managing editor of *HTR*.

I have to confess to you that as a young professor at the University of Geneva (Switzerland) at John Calvin's and Theodore Beza's divinity school I did not know much about American theological education and research. Educated in Europe, I knew that Karl Barth disagreed with Paul Tillich, but I had little awareness of Harvard Divinity School. But I knew very well one of the oldest periodicals of the United States, the *Harvard Theological Review*, which I read at the University of Geneva Public Library on the Salon Bonivard. Its subscription continues today and it is still available there.

I was the delegate of the University of Geneva to the board of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, Céligny close to Geneva, where I met Krister Stendahl, Dean of Harvard Divinity School, also a member of this board. I realized then how small my world was and how large and influential Harvard and its Dean were! Then, during a meeting of the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* in Basel, where we both spent some years along the Rhine river, I met James M. Robinson and he introduced me to Helmut Koester at the famous Café Spillmann. That was the beginning of my connections with Harvard. During my first visit in 1988 I met Harvey G. Cox and was pleased to tell him that the French translation of *The Secular City* was on the list of the required readings of one of my colleagues in Pastoral Theology. I was surprised then that he was still teaching and he still is today!

A scholarly periodical is a strange animal. It is very fragile: if suddenly three hundred people no longer subscribe, this is the end of the adventure. The price of the dollar or the level of the Dow Jones average, a change in the religious climate or the humor of the editorial board can also put *HTR* in danger. But a periodical is also strong, for it appeals to feelings and passions, not only to little grey cells. Members of the editorial board can defend a title with the greatest energy. Others, as volunteers, can devote hundred of hours to assure its survival. Weakness and strength are, therefore, two marks of any scholarly journal.

What we observe and celebrate today, however, is still another quality of *HTR*: continuity—1908–2008. As we say in French, “bon an, mal an,” as we say here in the liturgy of marriage “in good times and in bad,” during all these years Harvard Divinity School found people, authors, editors, and managing editors who were willing to publish regularly four issues per year.

To secure continuity—needed then and still today, really indispensable—demonstrates not only the characteristic American virtue of “determination,” but also scholarly “adaptation.” Intellectual life, theology in particular, has changed in the last hundred years. The study of religion has not remained the same. *HTR* has

had to accept or, better, to provoke changes, in the field of religion and theology, in methods, in persons.

Adaptation was needed also in another way. The twentieth century has been the century of specialization. One is no longer a New Testament scholar, but a Johannine scholar, not a Medievalist but an expert in the *Glossa ordinaria*. The trouble is that specialization does not curb another phenomenon, the enlarging of the fields. Harvard has now many specialists in Buddhism, while one person was enough in 1908 to cover the all of the non-Christian religions.

I remember a conversation with Michel de Certeau, who had been invited as visiting professor by my Faculty in Geneva. I mentioned to him his work as editor of Jean-Joseph Surin. He looked at me and told me: "I like higher criticism but I appreciate also a critical apparatus. This is the manual side of our intellectual work." To publish a scholarly periodical belongs also to that manual side of scholarship. It is important to avoid typos, to be correct with a Greek quotation, to avoid mistakes in foreign titles, to fix punctuation. But, of course, it is also a priority to know the difference between a good paper and an exceptional contribution. In the editorial work of a periodical, lower criticism cohabits, therefore, with higher criticism.

This morning our perspective will be retrospective: what was the religious, theological, and intellectual life at Harvard like in the beginning of the 20th century? Professor Peter J. Gomes will help us to gain a clearer vision concerning that time. Dr. Fay A. Martineau, who is responsible for the creation of a large index of the hundred volumes of *HTR*, due to an important grant of the Carpenter Foundation, will provide us a glimpse into her impressive collection. Then, Professor Helmut Koester, editor of *HTR* for many years, will discuss the special case of New Testament and religion in Antiquity to help us to understand what has changed in the last hundred years.

This afternoon our perspective will keep our interest in *HTR*'s past, but will add the possible prospective dimension for us to ponder. David C. Lamberth has chosen the title, "Original and Ongoing Theological Issues through 100 Years of *HTR*." Francis X. Clooney will entertain us with the topic, "The Future of *Harvard Theological Review* in a Global and Interreligious Age." All of the contributions presented today will constitute the core of a special issue of *HTR* in the Fall of 2008.

In conclusion I reiterate my gratitude to everyone who has helped in the preparations for this day of celebration.

I am pleased to introduce now the Rev. Professor Peter J. Gomes, who is my pastor at Memorial Church as he is the minister of many Harvard people—the man who, like Ulysses, has a thousand honorary tours in his pocket, the famous preacher and the one who keeps memories alive at Harvard. He will take us for a walk through Harvard in 1908, in the time of our grand- or great-grandparents. Please join with me in welcoming Professor Gomes.

Address: A Tour of Harvard in 1908

Peter J. Gomes
Harvard University

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am here as the best that could be got, which is to say that there are at least three others who would be much better suited to the task assigned to me than myself. Two are dead, my great teacher George Williams, who knew everything about everything and would have kept us much longer than I intend to keep you today; Bill Hutchison, whose field was modernism, of which the *Harvard Theological Review* is a remarkable example, and Conrad Wright, who is not dead but is retired, and may have decided never again to darken our precincts. These three, all of whom were my friends, teachers, and colleagues, would be able to explicate all the interstices of the year 1908 with fascinating and passionate insights, while I, as their student and the only one here, shall simply do the best I can with the assignment.

I have been asked to discuss “The Historical, Cultural, Theological, and Religious Situation at Harvard University in 1908.” Well, in one sense that could be a very short disquisition, for one could say that there wasn’t such a situation; and, on the other hand, one could do as I have tried to do, in going through the documents and circumstances that do honor to that title. So, I begin.

The *Harvard Theological Review* is described in George William’s history as the “corporate literary effort of the Divinity School faculty.” I have always been impressed that as a member of the Divinity School faculty I am associated with the *Harvard Theological Review*, although I have had nothing of any substance to do with it during these many years. I’ve never written for it, and I will confess that as a student it was a bit of a chore even to read it, but it was always reassuring to know that it existed. Then, when I entered into the glory of a professorship, to be described as a part of the editorial team was always something of great joy, and a coup d’état. It is always good to be associated with one’s betters, and this was certainly the intellectual case as far as I was concerned. An invitation to comment on the one hundredth anniversary of anything is an invitation not to be refused, and to comment on the hundredth anniversary of an intellectual and literary monument

such as this, which continues to do what it was meant to do from the very beginning, is a great privilege, and I certainly would not decline any great privilege.

The *Review* started in 1908 with George Foot Moore as editor, on an endowment provided by Miss Mildred Everett as a memorial to her late father, Charles Carroll Everett, dean from 1878 to his death in 1900. In the variety of things that I read, I saw that Miss Everett “partially” endowed the *Review*, and I don’t know if that was treasury-like persnicketyness, or if it became clear, as with so many other things at Harvard Divinity School, that costs soon outran means. Nevertheless, the *Review* seems never to have suffered from editorial stinginess, and whether Miss Everett provided sufficient funds to begin it or a stimulus to provoke others to do so, we are indebted to her for her filial duty to her father and her farsightedness for generations yet to come, in providing the means for the *Theological Review* to get off the ground.

I will set the context for the *Review*. I discovered that 1908 was a seminal year for all sorts of reasons, not least for the fact that the Andover-Theological Seminary, which had departed Cambridge and Harvard, shaking the dust of the place from its feet in 1808 for the safer and more orthodox climes of Andover, Massachusetts, decided for a variety of reasons best not gone into here, to return to Cambridge and enter into an article of affiliation with Harvard University. That is, the oldest theological school in New England, Andover Theological Seminary, returned in 1908 to the bosom of its erstwhile mother, Harvard, which itself was a momentous occasion. The result was a combination of resources in teaching and a theological reunion that closed the opening created a century earlier when the orthodox had withdrawn from Harvard and Cambridge because of the election of Henry Ware and the tendencies toward what would later be called Unitarianism. With due deference to my old teacher Conrad Wright, it was then known simply as liberal Christianity.

When Andover decided to return to Cambridge, it was not going to do so slinkily or unnoticed; rather, it decided that it would acquire property as near to Harvard as possible and build a new building on the eastern borders of the University, with its front doors facing Somerville and its hind parts facing Harvard. The building was completed and dedicated on Wednesday, October 25, 1911, and it was meant to stand out, which it does. It is Harvard’s only collegiate Gothic building, and it was built in purposeful departure from Harvard’s usual architectural vernacular. Distinct from everything else, it was a remarkable building in that it was intended to contain all that a sensible and modern divinity school required, including a common room, a library, classrooms, offices for the faculty, a chapel, and space to expand. From its inception, complementary wings were planned, with this part as the centerpiece and a dormitory wing on one side and a library wing on the other, and as we move into the twenty-first century we appear to be completing the design that originally was intended. The dedicatory exercises are described in great detail in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, in which I discovered for the first

time that the center tower, which we all recognize as the point of entry, was to be referred to as the “Founders Tower.” I had had no idea of that, and that must be why there are medallions of Calvin, Luther, and other reformers there, with not a Unitarian among them.

The affiliation between Andover and Harvard, begun in 1908 and expressed in this building in which we sit today, resulted in 1922 in the formation of the Theological School in Harvard University, a new entity in which both Andover and Harvard were to be subsumed, although they were not to lose their particular identities. Of that new institution, of which Abbott Lawrence Lowell was president, Willard Learoyd Sperry became its dean, and it was no accident that Sperry, a renowned Congregationalist preacher and minister and a member of the Andover faculty, was asked to preside over this new creation. The Congregationalists were worried that their old school would be lost in the greatness and grandeur of Harvard University, and every effort was made to avoid a sense of triumphalism upon the return of Andover to Cambridge. There is an account by Dean Sperry of how he was asked to become the dean. He was minister of the Central Congregational Church in Boston, which is now the Church of the Covenant, and he said that one day his secretary came in and said, “Mr. Lowell, of Harvard, wishes to see you.” He replied, “Am I to go to Cambridge?” and she answered, “No, he’s right outside in your outer office.” So, the pastor received the president of Harvard, and the president of Harvard is alleged to have said to him—according to Sperry—“Mr. Sperry, I want you to become dean of the new school we are creating in Cambridge.” Mr. Sperry said, “Well, Sir, I am not a scholar,” to which President Lowell responded, “I know that, Mr. Sperry, but all a dean is required to do is to know a scholar when he sees one, and I have the sense that you are able to do that.”

After a few minor circumlocutions it was agreed that The Reverend Dr. Sperry would become the dean of the new Theological School in Harvard University. This affiliation came to a premature and unhappy end upon the agitation of the Andover Board of Visitors, who protested, and in 1925 the relationship was disallowed by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts and Andover took its suit to Newton hill, where it has been ever since, and the Harvard school became Harvard Divinity School once again. All that remains of the union are the Andover-Harvard Library and Andover Hall, the interest in which the University acquired for three hundred fifty thousand dollars. It might also be said that the only tangible on-going living sign of that great hoped-for union was the *Harvard Theological Review*. I’ll come back to that in a minute.

The year of the *Review*’s birth, in 1908–1909, was the final year of President Eliot’s administration. His successor, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, had waited at least twenty years for Mr. Eliot to finally give over, and there was a sense of impatient expectation as to what might follow after Charles William Eliot’s long reign of forty years. Mr. Eliot had succeeded in making the Divinity School non-denominational by diversity in admissions and diversity in faculty appointments. He had long

determined that the Divinity School as simply a Unitarian finishing school would not be worthy either of that denomination or of the University, and thus worked hard to turn the Divinity School into a place that from his point of view would be worthy of the University. He shared Charles Carroll Everett's comprehensive and catholic spirit, and he saw the Divinity School as a place where the religion of the future could be worked out.

Now, I can tell Dean Graham a little bit about that conference about which he expressed total ignorance, and he may learn more than he wants to. I had to look it up. President Eliot wrote a very long paper, and delivered it here, on the religion of the future, addressing the eleventh session of the Harvard Summer School of Theology on July 22, 1909. The Harvard Summer School of Theology was apparently one of the great initiatives of this faculty, and won for it the long-spread support of its friends and admirers, and attracted the attention of President Eliot, who would be the last president to visit the school until 1953, when Mr. Pusey came. For President Eliot, the religion of the future seemed very much like the religion to which he was accustomed in the First Parish in Cambridge. This is what he said:

The religion of the future will not be based on authority either spiritual or temporal, there will be no personification of the primitive forces of nature, there will be no worship expressed or implied of ancestors, teachers, or tutors, no identification of any human being, however majestic in character with the eternal Deity. The primary object will not be personal welfare or safety. The religion of the future will not be propitiatory, sacrificial, or full of expiation. It will not perpetuate the Hebrew anthropomorphic representations of God. It will not be gloomy, ascetic, or maledictory. This twentieth century religion is not only to be in harmony with the great secular movements of modern society, democracy, individualism, social idealism, the zeal for education, the spirit of research, the modern tendency to welcome the new, the fresh powers of preventive medicine, and the recent advances in business and industrial ethics, but also in essential agreement with the direct personal teachings of Jesus as they are reported in the gospels. The revelation he gave mankind thus becomes more wonderful than ever. (Charles William Eliot; "The Man and His Beliefs" Volume II)

Those are Mr. Eliot's words, and that is how he imagined the religion of the future.

I would like to imagine a conversation between Pius X and President Eliot on the religion of the future, and I will come to the "acids of modernity" in a few minutes.

The world of 1908–1909 was a world caught between the idealistic modernism of President Eliot and the optimism represented by the new theological arguments in Cambridge, and the grim assessment of the theological situation offered by Professor Peabody in his article in the *Harvard Theological Review*, Volume 1, Number 1, to which the dean has already referred, and the anti-modernist onslaught

of Pius X, where a renewal of medieval Thomistic authority is called for to repudiate what he calls the “acids of modernity.” To read Pius X’s *Pasciendi*, his famous anti-modernist encyclical, and compare it with Mr. Eliot’s religion of the future would be a useful exercise. In the old days of the general examinations, someone might even have set it as a paper for seniors in the school. By 1908, the Divinity School, under the prodding of President Eliot, had achieved independence from the Unitarians and acceptance as a graduate school with standards worthy of the University. Dean William Wallace Fenn, whose picture you will see on the board, noted of this period:

Within the past fifty years, the school has grown from a Unitarian school for the ministry, unworthy alike of the University and the denomination it served, into a University school of theology unqualifiedly devoted to University methods and standards. (Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Development of Harvard University*, p. 471)

Having tried to describe this context of optimistic institutional transformation, I would propose that the *Harvard Theological Review* represents in intellectual activity what was hoped for, and expected, in the new theological arrangements in Cambridge from 1908 onward, and as such, I would argue, it remains the vessel in which the hopes of new theological and intellectual collaboration can survive and flourish in each new and changing cultural age. Thus, the ambition of Dean Everett and his immediate successors are to be continued in the *Harvard Theological Review*. The year 1908 was fruitful, filled with promise and opportunity, fulfillment of which continues to be the daily work of the *Harvard Theological Review*.

There may be more here than one bargained for, having to do with the institutional history out of which the *Harvard Theological Review* comes, and there may be a good deal less here than one might have expected of a survey of the contents of the volumes. I have before me Volume I, Number 1—at some expense—and the articles in it represent both the cream of the Protestant scholarship of the day and a marvelous survey of some of the hot theological issues of the western world at the time. The first article is by one of my predecessors and a former dean of this school, Francis Greenwood Peabody, and is a rather grim assessment of the theological situation in which he issues a call to theology, arguing that theologians have to be able to speak to people in the real world and the broader world, and not just to one another. Then Arthur C. McGiffert, from Union Seminary in New York and a friend of the Andover faculty, wrote a rather long piece on the modern idea of God; and William Adams Brown wrote, “Is Our Protestantism Still Protestant?” There is a turning-point in synoptic criticism by Benjamin W. Bacon; David Gordon Lyon of the Harvard Divinity faculty writes of recent excavations in Palestine; Thomas N. Carver writes of the economic basis of the problem of evil, and Charles F. Dole writes of the divine providence. There is enough in there for anybody, and probably everybody, and that standard has not declined over the century that we celebrate today.

I would like to suggest that the year 1908 was a year of great promise, great hope, and a year at Harvard in which the Divinity School, in a strange sort of way, came into its own and perhaps for the very first time in its existence was taken seriously as a center of intellectual activity both within the University and, by the singular means of the *Harvard Theological Review*, well beyond the University. The *Harvard Theological Review* is part of the international profile and intellectual ministry of this faculty, and to be associated with it is a privilege and a great honor.

So, the great affiliation that was hoped for between Andover and Harvard never materialized, and although there have been many difficult years that the institution has had to traverse between its founding in 1908 and the present year 2008, the fact of the continuity—as Professor Bovon aptly said—of the *Harvard Theological Review* in its original mission, that was creative enough to respond to the demands of each new age, is a sign that the hopes and fears of that great year were met in this particular publication. We have every reason to believe that this noble enterprise will continue in full vigor and in great health. Thank you very much.

Working on the Indices of the *Harvard Theological Review* (1908–2008)

Fay Martineau

Providence, Rhode Island

In discussing the work of indexing the *Harvard Theological Review*, I shall begin by describing the organization and development of the project, and the various ideals and principles involved in its design. Then I shall show what some specific keyword selections will call up on searches; these selections collectively exemplify the many diverse and distinctive features of the *Harvard Theological Review*'s collection. This article merely serves as an introduction to the Index; when I complete the project, I shall elaborate further on various matters and exemplary elements in a forthcoming expanded version of this lecture-based article.

When I was invited to consider this project, the initial idea was to employ several people, each of whom would take a portion of the articles *HTR* has published over the years and compile relevant keyword lists for that portion. To prepare for my own work on it, I sketched out a preliminary set of lists based on a random sampling of articles from different decades. My purpose was to get a feel for issues that might arise regarding changes in terminology, changes in content, and academic styles and interests over time, as well as how many articles might naturally bundle together under the aegis of certain general and more specific keywords. When I presented my first test case involving twenty-five articles, it became apparent that there was good reason to have one person coordinate the entire project in order to streamline the keyword format and thus produce as unified and coherent a result as possible. Such coherence is especially important given that the research mechanism of the resulting index will be two-fold. One will be able to type in keywords and gather and sift through the results. There will also, however, be an online list of all the assigned keywords, constituting a thematic index through which one can scroll. Editor François Bovon and managing editor Margaret Studier consequently encouraged me to take on the whole task. Given my eclectic academic background, I was quite happy to undertake a project that would enable me to draw upon my

wide-ranging interests and many years of readings in theology, of course, but also literature, politics, philosophy, languages, archaeology—the entire spectrum of fields that relate in various ways to *HTR*’s focus on religion. Regretfully, however, I am not a walking encyclopedia! Only such a creature could possibly achieve a perfect result with regard to giving each article full and appropriate representation. I am indeed learning much from the copious content, while categorizing each piece as well as possible.

After the initial sample of twenty-five keyword lists, I started at the beginning, a century ago, proceeding article by article, volume by volume. A brief segment in the very first volume of 1908 temporarily shook my confidence. The piece is an anonymous review of an earlier index project compiled by Ernest Richardson, for a series of articles published from 1890–1899. The commentator took a dim view of things: “Periodical articles on religion are like the plague of frogs in Egypt not only in number but in the fact that they appear in the most unlikely, not to say unsuitable, places.” Even worse for me, this writer took direct aim at efforts to index such articles: “it is perhaps not inappropriate to warn the student or the ‘general reader,’ who cannot for himself distinguish the obsolete, the void, and the fatuous from the live and significant, that such an index as this is a dangerous tool. Indeed it might be maintained without paradox that nothing contributes more to the perpetuation of antiquated error and humbug than indexes—especially to periodical literature . . . for they make it possible to ‘read up’ and ‘write up’ anything in heaven or earth, without the painful necessity of knowing anything about it.”

This commentator evidently suspected that someone in the future would index *HTR*, and thus decided to fire off the first criticism. At any rate, I recovered sufficient confidence to continue ascending the mountain of articles. The work gradually gained momentum after an early slow-down for the years 1914–1920, which was because each volume in those years contained an average of seventy-five book reviews alongside the articles. That initial abundance likely reflects the enthusiasm of a young publication, and I made keyword lists only for a selected set of those reviews. Since then, my work has gained a fair amount of systematic organization and coherence, with unavoidable adjustments along the way with regard to format and terminology.

The prevailing principle I apply in compiling the index involves a two-fold purpose. There is the standard scholarly one, in which quantity matters. A general rule is that a keyword should of course reflect an element that occupies a substantial percentage of an article—roughly two-thirds or three-fourths of the content. Anyone interested in, for example, “theodicy” would justifiably be frustrated if a keyword search led to articles in which theodicy is merely mentioned in one paragraph. However, my second purpose is to serve a wider audience for whom one cannot quantify value. I proceed with several types of hypothetical researchers in mind, who would either type in various keywords or scroll through the online index itself. My hypothetical seekers may certainly include religion-oriented academics, but I

have in mind as well historians, ministers-in-the-making, curious undergraduates, graduate students casting about for potential dissertation topics, creative writers—in essence, an eclectic audience. I want to enable this diverse group of people to catch some of the relatively rare, unusual, distinctive, quirky, or striking passages, themes, comments, perspectives, or views which may constitute some sort of serendipitous discovery and inspiration. I therefore accommodate both types of approaches to *HTR*: strictly academic research and free-wheeling exploration. Many keyword lists attend primarily or exclusively to the former; however many others also link to articles in which there are one or more items whose value is quantitatively small, but gem-like in quality. This valuation is admittedly subjective, at least in some cases; however, I hope the number of disappointed searches will be far outweighed by many happy ones.

I can present only a few examples of the many riches contained in one hundred years of the *Harvard Theological Review*. I want especially to describe some items in several older articles that should lead one further on to the dust-gathering tomes in Andover-Harvard Library or the Depository—books that a dissertation writer or historian or novelist or academic would do well to clean off and read with the fresh and questioning eyes of the postmodern era. For example, in the realm of religion and literature, index entries “children” and “Peabody, Josephine Preston,” will call up a 1914 article which explores how children were depicted in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction, with particular reference to Josephine Peabody’s writing. The same article also surveys that era’s poetry. It is intriguing to think about the issue of children with regard to religion-oriented fiction, and religion in general. Josephine Peabody may be an author worth bringing to the attention of contemporary scholars and novelists. The same may be the case for Mark Rutherford and William Hale White, whose novels receive fairly extensive description and analysis in another 1914 article by Willard Sperry.

In 1915 one can find an article about the Russian Orthodox Church that includes references to Quakerism in Russia, to an ardently idealistic reformer named Peter Verighin, and to various protest and reform movements that accompanied the rise of socialism in that country. This article is a historical treasure, composed as it was at the very brink of the 1917 Russian revolution. *HTR* was indeed a still very young publication when World War I shook faith in God, religion, humanity, and any hope at all that progress is more than a deceptive and ultimately futile concept. Among the myriad book reviews in the issues of 1921, the keywords “World War One” call up a review of six books of sermons that were inspired by that conflict. Those sermon collections have tantalizing or poignant titles like “Citizens of Two Worlds . . .,” “Addresses and Sermons to Students,” “The Breath in the Winds . . .,” and “What the War has Taught Us.”

In the 1930s, Harry Wolfson wrote some articles that masterfully synthesize many elements in the field of comparative religion and philosophy—articles which anyone can fish out with several keyword bait terms, including epistemology,

philosophy, and psychology, further specified as Aristotelian, Christian, Islamic, or Jewish. Wolfson's work raises the issue of how, on what terms, and to what extent scholarship can achieve timeless value. This should be a periodic meditation in any "present" age, when there is ever the tendency to subject past work to searing critiques, and when what has been done can so easily be dismissed as outmoded. Like people in other fields of endeavor, scholars forget that if so much scholarship thinking itself cutting edge "back then" can be summarily dismissed, then so will this era's seemingly inarguable views be scorned in a future we cannot now imagine. It is healthy for academics to make a pilgrimage to our predecessors' literary remains, in order to remind ourselves of the inherent mortality of our own work—but also, perhaps, to seek out the still glowing embers of research, analyses, and the resultant writings that contain still relevant insights. Browsing through and delving into *HTR*'s early decades therefore inspires further reflection about the scholarly enterprise and its ability to transcend time and change.

On the matter of pilgrimage, from a different angle and with regard to another historical treasure in *HTR*, I found a 1940 article by Francis Magoun which summarizes and amply quotes from two travel journals based on early medieval visits to Rome. The pilgrims were Sigeric, who served as the archbishop of Canterbury from 990–994, and Nikolas, the abbot of a Benedictine monastery in Iceland from 1155–1159. These two men's travel diaries offer a wealth of information about the conditions, rituals, relics, and architectural details of Rome's many holy sites in their respective eras.

My final example of the immense range of material in *HTR* is a 1944 article entitled "Probationers for Eternity: Notes on Religion in the United States in the Year 1800." The author, Peter Oliver, studied contemporary newspapers, journals, and sermons, which he carefully footnoted for further pursuit. This type of article naturally bundles in with many others under keyword phrases like "church history, Protestant." However, it is notable for me as the first article that justified a new keyword, namely "humor"—yet another topic rarely considered as worthy of what would be a paradoxically serious study, an investigation of the theme of humor with regard to religion. At any rate, Oliver mentions a tendency in 1800 to make light of the church, which the Puritan divines of the previous century would have quickly suppressed. Although this topic does not occupy two-thirds of his article, that he brings it up at all is worth knowing. It also seems worth discovering, especially within religion's intensely serious domain, that in 1800 there was some comic relief. A favorite joke appearing that year in many books and gazettes (Oliver cites several) was about a farmer who, when asked about his religious opinion, declared that he had no preference with regard to Arminianism, Socinianism, or deism, but that he definitely opposed rheumatism. Oliver additionally refers to parodies of the catechism of the Presbyterians—such as changing "what is the chief end of man?" to "what is the chief end of rum?"; as well as a poem with lines like: "from a war with the French Republic, Good Lord deliver us; from all old tories, from

aristocrats, from the illuminati of New England and from the deceits of the devil, Good Lord deliver us.” Such are the multi-faceted treasures ready to emerge when keywords summon them.

As I mentioned at the outset, in the near future I shall compose a more comprehensive description of the *HTR* index and various relevant matters. For now, the groundwork is firm, the progress is steady. The journal we are celebrating today is clearly a remarkable treasure and resource, and I hope the index will serve not only those who know what they want, but also those who are poised for discovery and inspiration.

New Testament Scholarship through One Hundred Years of the *Harvard Theological Review*

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In order to answer the question of the involvement of *Harvard Theological Review* in the publication of essays relating to the New Testament, I have gone through all the published indices that were issued by the journal. The first index was published in 1938 and covered the journal's first thirty years; thereafter indices were published at ten-year intervals. The figures to which I shall refer in this paper are not necessarily exact, but they offer a reasonably good indication of the commitment of *Harvard Theological Review* to the field of New Testament studies. I did not limit the following survey to essays that deal with the New Testament proper, narrowly defined. There are numerous articles that contribute to New Testament studies indirectly, as they deal with the literature of postexilic Israel, the so-called Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus, or rabbinic Judaism. Other areas of scholarly endeavor relating to the New Testament and early Christianity are the history of ancient Christianity, New Testament apocrypha including the writings from Nag Hammadi, the Apostolic Fathers, early Christian apologists, and ancient church history in general. Finally, many of these essays, often written by New Testament scholars, deal with material from the Greco-Roman world.

I have therefore divided my survey into the following general categories:

- 1) New Testament proper;
- 2) New Testament textual criticism;
- 3) Literature from postexilic Israel and Judaism, including Philo and Josephus;
- 4) History of ancient Christianity;
- 5) The Greco-Roman world.

Statistics of HTR Articles Relating to New Testament Studies

	New Testament	Textual Criticism	Post-exilic Israel	Ancient Christianity	Greco-Roman World
1908–1937	51	51	11	26	17
1937–1968	51	14	54	49	77
1969–2006	107	7	139	122	41
Totals	209	72	204	179	135

	Totals - NT and related areas	Total Articles Published	% Total Articles
1908–1937	156	600	26%
1937–1968	245	600	41%
1969–2006	416	760	55%
Totals	799	1,960	45%

Note: The above numbers may not all be exact. Sometimes classification of an article is difficult.

■ Some Analysis of These Figures

What I find interesting in general is the change of numbers over the three periods under consideration. While they may, to an extent, reflect the editors' preferences, to a higher degree they indicate changing primary areas of interest among scholars. This is true of all three periods under consideration.

■ The First Period: 1908–1937

In the first period exactly half of all articles on the New Testament dealt with textual criticism. This was the period in which new discoveries of manuscripts of the New Testament, especially papyri, was central. Moreover, two leading scholars in this enterprise were members of the faculty of Harvard Divinity School: James Hardy Ropes and Kirsopp Lake. The former wrote "The Greek Catena to the Catholic Epistles" and "Three Papers on the Text of Acts." The latter published "The Text of the Gospels and the Koredethi Codex," "The Sinaitic and Vatican Manuscripts

and the Copies Sent by Eusebius to Constantine,” and (together with his later wife Silva New) “The Caesarean Text of the Gospel of Mark.” There is also an essay on Koredethi Codex by the renowned Dutch scholar J. de Zwaan. Campbell Bonner wrote on the biblical papyri at the University of Michigan and also on papyri of the Shepherd of Hermas. B. H. Streeter published an article on the Caesarean text of the Gospels and on Codex Washingtonianus, H. A. Sanders published several articles on the Michigan papyrus collection and on an early papyrus fragment of the Gospel of Matthew, and R. V. G. Tasker wrote on the Chester Beatty Papyri. William H. P. Hatch appears as the author of two notes on the text of Luke and on an uncial fragment of the Gospels. A new interest in ancient versions of the New Testament is also visible: William H. P. Hatch wrote on Coptic fragments of Gospel texts and, together with James Hardy Ropes, an article entitled “The Vulgate, Peshitto, Sahidic, and Bohairic Versions of Acts and the Greek Manuscripts.” R. P. Blake contributed seven essays on the Georgian version of the New Testament and one on the Armenian version. R. P. Casey contributed a number of essays on the Armenian version; his other contributions to the journal concern Gnostic amulets and the Valentinians. J. A. Montgomery wrote on the Ethiopic text of the Acts of the Apostles. In this company can also be found one essay by E. C. Colwell (“Is there a Lectionary Text of the Gospels?”). Another area of interest pertaining to the New Testament text is indicated by an article by Jacob Geerling and Silva New (the later Silva Lake): “Chrysostom’s Text of the Gospel of Mark.” All of the eleven articles on post-exilic Judaism are contributions by George Foot Moore. I found nothing on intertestamental literature or on Philo and Josephus.

Among the articles on the New Testament proper, fourteen come from the hand of B. W. Bacon on various topics ranging from Jesus and Gospel criticism to the book of the Acts of the Apostles and reflections on Paul. There are four articles by Henry J. Cadbury on the Gospels and Acts—but also one on the Norwegian Quakers. Another giant among scholars of his time, Maurice Goguel, wrote five essays for the journal on various topics. Several contributions come from Harvard’s James Hardy Ropes, among them one entitled “The Reasonable Appeal of the Book of Revelation” and another essay on New Testament miracles. Among contributions from non-American scholars, two review articles on New Testament literature by the German scholar Hans Windisch stand out, as well as one article by the Dutch scholar J. de Zwaan on the Book of Acts.

Essays concerning the Greco-Roman world are few, but some are of great importance. The renowned Harvard professor of classical epigraphy Sterling Dow published in the last volume of this period his “The Egyptian Cults in Athens,” which has not lost its importance to this day. An unusual contribution is an article in French by the famous Franz Cumont on a fragment reporting rituals for initiation into a mystery.

The relatively few articles on ancient Christianity nevertheless come from the hands of great scholars, especially from Europe. There is one essay by Adolf von

Harnack, one by Hans Lietzmann, one by Friedrich Loofs, and one by J. de Zwaan. Gustav Krüger, one of the great universal church historians of the early twentieth century, wrote six review articles on literature about church history from the years 1914 to 1920, the first two devoted to early Christianity and the ancient church. Leading with publications in this field is, of course, Harvard's Kirsopp Lake with wide-ranging contributions: "The Apostles' Creed," "The *Epistula Apostolorum*," "A Lost Manuscript of Eusebius' *Demonstratio Evangelica*," articles on the texts of several writings of Athanasius, and last but not least, "On American, English, and Dutch Theological Education." Next to Kirsopp Lake stands Harvard's George LaPiana with eight articles ranging from "Ancient and Modern Christian Apologetics" to "The Roman Church and Modern Italian Democracy." Two essays on Ignatius of Antioch come from James Moffat.

■ The Second Period: 1937–1967

Fewer articles focusing on textual criticism appear during these second 30 years of the journal. William H. P. Hatch nonetheless contributed four essays which draw attention to newly discovered or hitherto neglected papyri. R. V. G. Tasker is present with an introduction to New Testament textual criticism. C. C. McCown writes on the use of the codex and the scroll for New Testament manuscripts. M. Jack Suggs reflects on the Gospel text of Eusebius, as does D. S. Wallace Hadrill. The name of a scholar who would contribute important essays in future decades appears for the first time in 1962: Jay Eldon Epp, with an article on anti-Judaic tendencies in the text of Codex Bezae. Essays on matters of detail in papyrus manuscripts are discussed by Robert W. Funk, Harold S. Murphy, and Harold J. Greenlee. But it is evident that this area is no longer at the forefront of scholarship related to the New Testament.

At the same time, the study of Judaism now moves into the foreground, led by a new generation of important scholars; George Foote Moore's name no longer appears. Lois Finkelstein opens the series of articles on rabbinic Judaism in 1938 with an article on the oldest midrash; two more essays follow. Rufus M. Jones follows with an important article on Jewish mysticism. Jacob J. Rabinowitz reflects on "Marriage Contracts in Ancient Egypt in the Light of Jewish Sources," and on "The Sermon on the Mount and the School of Shammai"; from Zeev W. Falk comes an article entitled "On Talmudic Vows"; from Avraham Holtz, "The Concept of the Qiddush Hashem in the Jewish Prayer Book"; J. Liver writes on the half-shekel offering; and Hugo Mantel on the Great Synagogue and on ordination in the period of the Temple.

Jacob Neusner also enters the ranks of contributors to the field of Judaism with two contributions in the sixties. Carl Kraeling's essay on "The Episode of Roman Standards in Jerusalem" appears early in this period, as do two contributions by James A. Montgomery and an essay by Joseph Ward Swain on "Gamaliel's Speech and Caligula's Statue." There are two contributions by Elias Bickerman: "On

the Civic Prayer of Jerusalem” and “The Symbolism of the Dura Synagogue.” Harvard’s eminent Judaic scholar Harry Austryn Wolfson, newly arrived at Harvard University, opens the discussion of Philo of Alexandria with two contributions that deal with Aristotle, Arabic Philosophy, Maimonides, and Philo; later he contributes an essay entitled, “The Philonic God of Revelation and His Latter-Day Deniers.” The British scholar W. D. Davies reflects on the relationship of the Scrolls to New Testament passages. Apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings are discussed for the first time in the history of *Harvard Theological Review*: Moses Hadas on *Aristeas* and *3 Maccabees*; later, Michael Stone on the *Ascension of Adam* and on *Fourth Ezra*; and V. Tcherikover on the *Letter of Aristeas*. In the fifties of the last century the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls begins to demand fresh attention. The first article on this subject is an essay by Joseph M. Baumgarten on the sectarians of the Dead Sea. Harvard’s Frank Moore Cross writes his ground-breaking article on “The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of the Judean Desert,” as well as an essay on the Samaritans. Other essays dealing with the Dead Sea Scrolls are contributed by Bruno W. Dombrowski and Robert Polzin. James A. Sanders and John Strugnell, newly arrived at the Harvard Divinity Faculty, write essays on the *Psalms Scroll*, the latter also on *Ezekiel the Tragedian*. Even essays on medieval and later Judaism now appear in the journal: Jacob J. Rabinowitz on usury laws in the Middle Ages, and Louis Feldman on Hasidism.

While contributions to the field of New Testament textual criticism have dwindled to a small number, the number of essays on subjects relevant to New Testament studies is exactly the same as in the first thirty years of the *Harvard Theological Review*. Old topics, today peacefully laid to rest by most scholars, still garner some attention. Christopher Butler discusses “St. Luke’s Debt to St. Matthew.” Henry C. Russel wonders whether Luke or Acts was written first. Wilfred Lawrence Knox is once more concerned with the ending of Mark’s Gospel; and Sherman E. Williams with “Biblical Quotations in Matthew,” soon thereafter dealt with comprehensively by Krister Stendahl in his book, *The School of Saint Matthew*.¹ G. A. Harrer still worries about “Saul Who Also Is Called Paul.” Still the grandmaster of early 20th century New Testament scholarship, Henry J. Cadbury contributes three essays to the journal, the last published in 1965. New perspectives come from Robert M. Grant, who is able to connect New Testament scholarship with the larger perspective of the history of ancient Christianity in several articles. H. J. Bell challenges gospel scholarship with an article on the newly discovered fragment of the *Gospel of Papyrus Egerton 2*. Arnold Erhardt treats proverbs in the Gospels in a broader context and investigates “Christianity before the Apostles’ Creed.”

The discussion of the Pauline Corpus and its original form appears on the pages of the journal in articles by Jack Finegan, John Knox, and Charles P. Anderson. Questions of New Testament theology, long absent from the pages of *Harvard*

¹ Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Lund: Gleerup, 1954; repr., 1968).

Theological Review, assert themselves in essays by Donald Joseph Selby on eschatology, by Wilfred Knox on the divine-hero Christology, and by my reflections on Hebrews 13. A totally new light for the understanding of Paul is ignited by Krister Stendahl's challenging article, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West." There are also more contributions that relate New Testament questions to the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls. John A. T. Robinson considers the baptism of John in this context. James S. Ackerman investigates the Gospel of John in relation to the rabbinic understanding of Psalm 82. The German Old Testament scholar Klaus Baltzer contributes an important essay on the understanding of the Lukan version of the story of Jesus' entry into the Temple in the light of Old Testament parallels. Scotland's Robert McL. Wilson, in an article published in 1960, introduces for the first time the newly discovered *Gospel of Thomas* from the Nag Hammadi Library into the discussion of Gospel literature. There is without question a burgeoning of interest in understanding the New Testament in light of the Old Testament, Jewish sources, and Gnostic materials, especially in the last decade of this period, no doubt due to the discoveries and publications of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the texts from the Gnostic Nag Hammadi Library.

While new trajectories in the New Testament scholarship of Germany on form criticism, the new quest for the historical Jesus, and New Testament theology still cannot be observed in the pages of the *Harvard Theological Review*, there are signs of new perspectives prompted by comparative studies of contemporary ancient sources. With respect to studies in the history of ancient Christianity in the first years of this period, Campbell Bonner continues his work with several contributions to the journal on Melito's *Passover Homily* and articles on amulets and exorcism. An astonishing number of leading scholars publish essays in the area of Patristic studies: Johannes Quasten with two articles; Cyril Richardson on the Quartodecimans, Synoptic chronology, and Hippolytus; Henry Chadwick on *Papyrus Egerton 2*, Celsus and Origen, Ignatius of Antioch, and the Council of Nicea; Robert M. Grant with a variety of articles on Athenagoras, Tatian, Irenaeus, Theophilus, Pliny and the Christians, and an essay on studies in early Christian apologists. Ralph Marcus presents an essay on Origen, and Christine Mohrmann a discussion of *sacramentum* in early Christian writings (in French!). There are also five articles by Harry Austryn Wolfson on various aspects of Patristic philosophy. Harvard's George Huntston Williams appears for the first time as a contributor with an essay on a document ascribed to St. Ambrose.

Most remarkable is the greatly increased number of essays on the Greco-Roman world, evidently inspired by Arthur Darby Nock, who was the editor of the journal during most of this period. Nock, not a theologian but a scholar of the Classics, was evidently determined to bring the history of religions into *Harvard Theological Review*, and history of religions meant for him primarily Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman religion. This corresponded to the course on the history of religions that he offered regularly; in this course he taught Greek and Roman

religion and then invited professors from Persian, Indian, and Islamic studies to give a few additional lectures. Typical articles published during this period were "The Mithraic Symbolism of Mercury Carrying the Infant Dionysus," by Pray Phyllis Bober; "Aretologia or Teratologia?," "Theology and Mythology in Aeschylus," and "Herakles and the Gospels" by Herbert Jennings Ross, who wrote a total of 16 essays for the journal; "Athens, Eleusis, and the Homeric Hymn to Demeter" by Francis R. Walton; and "On the Origin of the Rotas-Sator Square" by Duncan Fishwick. Renowned scholars were apparently invited to offer articles for the journal. Among them were Herbert Bloch ("The Last Pagan Revival in the West," "A Monument of the Lares Augusti"); A. Cameron ("Inscriptions Relating to Manumission and Confession"); William Scott Ferguson ("The Attic Orgeones"); Herold Mattingly ("The Later Paganism" and "The Religious Background of the 'Historia Augusta'"); and Werner Jaeger ("The Greek Ideas of Immortality"). The most famous scholar in the study of Greek religion of his time, Martin P. Nilsson, contributed nine essays during those decades (one published in German). Nock himself published seven essays on various subjects, among them "The Cult of Heroes," "Orphism or Popular Philosophy," "Gnosticism," and a Memorial article about Nilsson. Charles Edson, to whom we owe the monumental edition of the inscriptions from Thessalonica, wrote an article on the "Cults of Thessalonica," which is still very valuable after more than half a century. A. J. Festugière, whose publication of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (with a critical edition of the Greek and Latin texts by A. D. Nock) became authoritative, contributed an essay on the Isis Aretalogies (in French). With a total of 77 essays in this category, more than the number of essays in any other category, these decades of *Harvard Theological Review* became a valuable resource for important and lasting contributions on Greek and Roman religion.

■ The Third Period: 1968–2006

Arthur Darby Nock died in 1963, just before a special issue in his honor with contributions by his colleagues and friends, prepared under the leadership of Krister Stendahl, could be presented to him on a festive occasion. It was natural that Krister Stendahl should become Nock's successor as editor of *HTR*. Two New Testament scholars, myself and François Bovon, followed.

In these last 38 years the area of New Testament textual criticism has shrunk to a mere seven contributions. Most of them are significant articles by Eldon J. Epp, the most distinguished scholar in the field of New Testament textual criticism of those decades.

Contributions to the study of the New Testament have greatly increased, although it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between essays concentrating on New Testament issues on the one hand and those that investigate other Jewish or Christian materials in order to draw conclusions with respect to New Testament interpretation on the other hand. Special topics and particular passages treated often, most of them

by former Harvard doctoral students, include Matthew 23:27–28 (Samuel Tobias Lachs), the Parable of the Regretful Son (J. Ramsey Michaels), the Lukan travel narrative (David Gill), Statistics on Q (Charles E. Carlston and Dennis Norlin), Eschatology in Q (John S. Kloppenborg), Paul's farewell speech in the Book of Acts (Thomas Budesheim), Romans 8:26–27 (George MacRae), *Pneumatikos* and *Psychikos* in 1 Corinthians (Richard Horsley), 2 Corinthians 10 (Arthur J. Dewey), the interpolation of 1 Thessalonians 2:13–18 (Birger Pearson), Paul's Letter to Philemon (Forrester Church), James 2:2–4 (Roy B. Ward), Hebrews 4:1–11 (Harold W. Attridge), and Hebrews 8–10 by the same author; there are also several articles by Adela Yarbro Collins entitled, "The Function of Excommunication in Paul," "Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation," and "The Origin of the Designation of Jesus as the Son of Man." Among the articles dealing with major topics are "Portraits of Jesus in Contemporary North American Scholarship," by Marcus J. Borg; "Paul and the Jesus Tradition" by Stephen J. Patterson; "The Interest in Life of Jesus Theology as a Paradigm for the Social History of Biblical Criticism" by Dieter Georgi; and "The Sayings Gospel Q and the Quest of the Historical Jesus" by John S. Kloppenborg.

There are an increasing number of essays that relate specific questions of New Testament interpretation to contemporary materials: Acts 27–28 in the light of pagan beliefs (Gary B. Miles and Garry Trompf), Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (E. P. Sanders), 1 Corinthians 3:15 and the School of Shammai (John T. Townsend), Genre and Function of the Markan Passion Narrative (George W. E. Nickelsburg). From Morton Smith comes "Pauline Worship as seen by a Pagan"; from François Bovon, "The Synoptic Gospels and the Non-Canonical Acts of the Apostles"; from Steven J. Friesen, "Archaeology in the Interpretation of the Apocalypse." Here I would also list my own contributions: "Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels," "Mark 9:43–47 and Quintilian 8.3.75," "The Divine Human Being," and others.

Several distinguished scholars, some from Europe, appear: Jacob Jerwell, "On the Law in Luke-Acts"; Nils Alstrup Dahl, "Gentiles, Christians and Israelites in Ephesians"; David Daube, "Onesimus"; Johan S. Vos, "Paul's Argumentation in Galatians 1–2"; Michael Lattke, "The Call to Discipleship and Proselytizing."

The area of "Judaism," including post-exilic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and rabbinic Judaism, has become most prominent in this third period of the journal. Among essays in this category are Morton Smith's discussion of Zealots and Sicarii; A. J. Baumgarten's discussion of the Pharisaic Paradosis; Bernadette Brooten's "Jewish Women's History in the Roman Period"; Ross Kraemer's "A New Inscription from Malta and the Question of Women Elders in Diaspora Jewish Communities"; eadem, "On the Meaning of the Term Jew in Greco-Roman Inscriptions"; eadem, "Jewish Tuna and Christian Fish: Identifying Religious Affiliation in Epigraphic Sources"; Doron Mendels, "Hellenistic Utopia and the Essenes"; Shaye Cohen, "Crossing the Boundary and Becoming Jew"; Tal Ilan, "The Attraction of Aristocratic Women to Phariseism During the Second Temple Period";

L. Michael White, "Synagogue and Society in Imperial Ostia: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence"; idem, "The Delos Synagogue Revisited: Recent Fieldwork in the Greco-Roman Diaspora." The Greek and Jewish Inscriptions from the Synagogue of Sardis were published by David Mitten and Frank M. Cross. Christine Hayes, "Forced Circumcision and the Shifting Role of Gentiles in Hasmonean Ideology"; Albert J. Baumgarten, "Marcel Simon's Verus Israel as a Contribution to Jewish History"; Michael E. Stone, "A Reconsideration of Apocalyptic Visions."

Many contributions deal with one or another piece of Apocryphal or Pseudepigraphic literature: The *Epistle of Heraclitus* (John Strugnell and Harry Attridge), the *Testament of Moses* (Adela Yarbro Collins), the *Enochic Pentateuch* (Jonas Greenfield and Michael Stone, respectively), *Pseudo-Philo* (Daniel Harrington), *Ezekielus the Dramatist* and Ezekiel the Prophet (Steven Bowman and Ben Zion Wacholder), Ben Sira (Saul M. Olyan), and the *Testament of Levi* (James Kugel).

The Dead Sea Scrolls are treated in several contributions by J. T. Milik, Jerome Murphy O'Connor, Patrick W. Skehan, Lawrence Wills and Andrew M. Wilson, and Tal Ilan. Philo is treated in a number of essays by J. Edgar Bruns, John R. Levison, Sharon Lea Mattla, Joan Taylor and Philip R. Davies, and Maren R. Niehoff. Josephus, rarely mentioned in earlier decades of the journal, becomes the subject of attention in essays by Shaye Cohen, Dennis C. Duling, Seth Schwartz, Louis H. Feldman, and John R. Levison; see also Shelly Matthews, "Ladies' Aid: Gentle Noblewomen as Benefactors in the Antiquities." A number of essays deal with rabbinic Judaism: contributions come from Burton L. Visotzky, Edward M. Greshfield, Sheldon Isenberg, Samuel Tobias Lachs, Jacob Neusner, and others.

There are also contributions on later Judaism through the Middle Ages, e.g., Robert Chazan, "Confrontation in the Synagogue of Narbonne: A Christian Sermon and a Jewish Reply"; Lawrence Kaplan, "Maimonides on the Miraculous Elements in Prophecy"; Yosef Hayim Jerushalmi, "The Inquisition and the Jews of France in the Tome of Gui"; and Zev Warren Harvey, "A Third Approach to Maimonides' Cosmogony-Prophetology Puzzle."

In addition, this period brings a greater number of contributions to the history of Ancient Christianity. These concern not only the traditional Apostolic Fathers and Church Fathers but also increasingly the New Testament Apocrypha and the newly discovered Gnostic texts from the Nag Hammadi Library. A number of essays contribute to general topics in this area: Paul Keresztes, "Marcus Aurelius a Persecutor?"; W. H. C. Frend, "Early Christianity and Society: A Jewish Legacy in the Pre-Constantinian Era"; Frank D. Gilliard, "Senatorial Bishops in the Fourth Century"; Elaine H. Pagels, "Christian Apologists and the 'Fall of the Angels': An Attack on Roman Imperial Power"; Robert L. Wilken, "Early Christian Chiliasm, Jewish Messianism, and the Idea of the Holy Land"; Paul Corby Finney, "Early Christian Architecture: The Beginnings"; and William Schoedel, "Apologetic Literature and Ambassadorial Activities." Among the Apostolic Fathers, essays deal

with the *Didache* (Stephen Gero, Bentley Layton), *2 Clement* (Karl Paul Donfried), Ignatius of Antioch (William R. Schoedel, Robert Stoops), and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (Robert F. Allen and Robert Mathiesen).

Several articles deal with New Testament Apocrypha, including the *Apocalypse of Peter* (David Fiensy), *Fifth Ezra* (Robert A. Kraft), articles on the Church Fathers featuring Justin Martyr (Bishop Demetrius Trakatellis), Irenaeus (Robert M. Grant), Tertullian (F. Forrester Church), Cyprian (G. W. Clarke), Eusebius (D. S. Wallace-Hadrill), Gregory of Nyssa (Harry Austryn Wolfson), Augustine (John Heil, Archibald M. Young, David Chidester, John P. Langan, James Wetzel, and others), *Ambrosiaster* (David G. Hunter and Silke-Petra Bergjan), Cyprian (G. W. Clarke), Eusebius (D. S. Wallace-Hadrill), Basil of Caesarea (Vasiliki Limberis), Apollinarius (Kelly McCarthy Spoerl), and John Chrysostom (Blake Leyerle, Margaret M. Mitchell).

The Nag Hammadi Library makes its entry with an ambitious critical edition of the Coptic text and English translation of the *Hypostasis of the Archons* in three separate articles by Bentley Layton (with a calligraphy of the Coptic text by the author because there was not yet a Coptic font available at the time!). General topics of Gnosticism are discussed by Elaine H. Pagels in "Conflicting Versions of Valentinian Eschatology: Irenaeus' Treatise vs. the *Excerpts from Theodotus*" and "The Demiurge and His Archons—A Gnostic view of the Bishop and Presbyters?"; as well as by John Whittaker in "Basilides on the Ineffability of God"; Tito Orlandi in "A Catechesis Against Apocryphal Texts by Shenute and the Texts of Nag Hammadi"; Birger A. Pearson in "Gnostic Interpretation of the Old Testament in the *Testament of Truth*" and "Gnosticism as Platonism: With Special Reference to *Marsanes*"; and by Julian V. Hills in "Three 'Matthean' Aphorisms in the *Dialogue of the Savior*."

The Greco-Roman world is represented by fewer contributions than in the second period of the journal. Several of these are important essays, however: Hans Dieter Betz, "The Delphic Maxim ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ in Hermetic Interpretation"; Oscar Broneer, "Paul and the Pagan Cults of Isthmia"; David Gill, "Trapezomata: A Neglected Aspect of Greek Sacrifice"; Dennis Smith, "The Egyptian Cults at Corinth"; Dieter Georgi, "Who is the True Prophet?" (the essay discusses Vergil and Horace); Ross Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysus"; Frederick W. Norris, "Isis, Sarapis and Demeter in Antioch of Syria"; Roy Bowen Ward, "Women in Roman Baths"; Marianne Palmer Bonz, "Differing Approaches to Religious Benefaction: The Late-Third Century Acquisition of the Sardis Synagogue"; and Rebecca Lesses, "Speaking with Angels: Jewish and Greco-Egyptian Revelatory Adjuration." One remarkable feature of these contributions is the fact that many come from former Harvard students in the field of New Testament studies.

■ Some Reflections on These Findings

It is evident that a major factor in the shifts of emphasis from one period to another is general scholarly interest. New discoveries of manuscripts, particularly of New Testament papyri, brought new excitement to the scene of New Testament study, and American scholars, some educated in Europe, such as James Hardy Ropes, or coming from Europe, such as Kirsopp Lake, played an important role in this discussion. Later, the center for these investigations had moved to the text-critical institute in Münster, where it became streamlined without achieving any significant progress, as J. Eldon Epp has so aptly argued in several publications.

A period of new discoveries came in the middle of the last century with the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library, triggering a renewed interest in the study of both Judaism and Gnosticism. At the same time, fundamental political events had changed the face of scholarship. Germany had been a center for the scholarly study of Judaism before and after World War I. It was also the center for the study of languages pertaining to the investigation of relevant ancient sources. But that changed with the arrival of Hitler's government. Not only the Jewish elite was forced to emigrate, but also many leading scholars in other disciplines migrated to the United States, among them Werner Jaeger and Herbert Bloch, both coming to Harvard. Arthur Darby Nock, himself a scholar from Britain, would not have been able to recruit so many scholars of the Greco-Roman world, had not the weight of the study of the Classics and of Hellenistic religion shifted to Britain and to the United States.

The shift of the center of scholarship from Germany to the United States is most clearly visible in three fields: Ancient Judaism, New Testament, and Christian Coptic sources.

The reason for the shift in the study of Judaism is evident. In my first year at Harvard, in 1958, I was introduced to a circle of Jewish scholars at Brandeis University. That I was able to converse fluently in German meant for these Jewish colleagues that I was Jewish: speaking German was clear evidence of that! Harry Austryn Wolfson once told me that his dream as a student was to move to Berlin in order to study at the famous Jewish Institute there. Now, however, one had to go to America (or to Israel). Clearly, for the study of Judaism, and especially for the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the interested scholarly community was now located in America. The study of rabbinic Judaism as well no longer had a vital center in Europe.

The story concerning the study of New Testament Gnosticism since the middle of the last century is more complicated.

1) In Germany the educators for a new generation of scholars had disappeared. The greatest Coptic scholar of the twentieth century, Hans Jacob Polotski, was forced to leave Germany and moved to Jerusalem; the leading rabbinic scholar, Joseph Lieberman, and the most creative interpreter of Gnosticism, Hans Jonas, were in America. Moreover—and this is very important—some of those who had

the necessary skills as educators had sold themselves to the Nazi government, such as Gerhard Kittel and Karl Georg Kuhn. Once Polotski had gone to Israel there was barely anyone left in Germany who knew Coptic (with the exception of Martin Krause in Münster and several scholars in East Germany).

2) Germany was very slow after World War II to rebuild its academic and scholarly community. A young scholar—such as myself—would only hear the advice to wait a long time for a permanent appointment or to become a minister and lead a church. In the field of New Testament studies, I came to Harvard from Heidelberg; from there Dieter Georgi followed me after a few years, and Hans Dieter Betz moved to Claremont and then to Chicago. Several others accepted permanent positions at theological schools in this country.

3) Then came the Dead Sea Scrolls. Scholars in that field can tell their own stories. The original team for the publication of the Scrolls consisted of one German and one French scholar; the others were Americans, among them Harvard's Frank M. Cross and John Strugnell. Quite a few of the articles in the third period of *Harvard Theological Review* were contributed by members of this original team and their students.

4) The Nag Hammadi Library: For more than a decade, French, British, and Dutch scholars had tried to lay hands on the manuscripts of the Nag Hammadi Library. The most they achieved was to steal one of the codices in an illegal export from Egypt. Mystery novels could have been written on that affair. Very little was published, and the British and French scholars were denied access to the remaining codices still in Egypt after the Suez War of 1956. At Harvard and at Claremont, James Robinson and I had nonetheless told our students early on to learn Coptic. We were lucky to have the resources (Tom Lambdin at Harvard), and those who were ready for advanced studies in Coptic, such as Bentley Layton, we sent to Jerusalem to study under Polotski. Thus James Robinson was able to assemble a team of about thirty scholars who could work on the translation and critical edition of the Nag Hammadi Library, most of them educated at Claremont or Harvard, only one of them a scholar from Germany (Alexander Böhlig). This and other factors put America in the leading international position in scholarship of the New Testament and the related areas of Judaism and Gnosticism.

Other factors that contributed to the shifts in emphasis in the various periods. But they are less significant than major shifts in the political world and the location of competent scholarly communities. Whether an editor of the journal is known as a leading scholar in a particular field of study plays some role. More important is the question of the commitment of students. Harvard students in the area of non-canonical literature, both Jewish and Christian, and in related fields sent their essays for publication. Strong doctoral programs continue to produce the best potential contributors to our scholarly journal, whose 100th anniversary we celebrate today.

Original and Ongoing Theological Issues through One Hundred Years of the *Harvard Theological Review*

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The first words of the inaugural issue of the *Harvard Theological Review* in January 1908 were those of Francis Greenwood Peabody, Plummer Professor of Christian Morals and sometime Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, from 1901–1906. An ordained Unitarian minister, Peabo, as he was affectionately called by the undergraduates, was known most prominently around College haunts for having convinced the Corporation (the President and Fellows of Harvard College) to make Chapel attendance optional while he was Preacher to the University. More importantly, however, he was the main proponent of Social Ethics in both the College and the Divinity School and Harvard's own expositor of the Social Gospel some years before Walter Rauschenbusch made that term popular. Peabody was also a key professor of German thought and theology in the Divinity School.¹

Peabody is a signal figure in the history of the Divinity School, having done his own studies in the College when the University was still mired in the rote teaching methods that Ralph Waldo Emerson so strongly lamented in his famed Divinity School address. 1869, the year of Peabody's baccalaureate, was, however, also the first of Charles Eliot's transformative presidency at Harvard. Although the Divinity School took some time to alter its own methods of teaching and move away from its "orthodox" Unitarianism, Peabody's experience over his next three years in Divinity study was enlivened by the widening intellectual world Eliot immediately brought in. Emerson himself, among others, lectured on philosophy in the Yard during Peabody's first year of theological studies, and Peabody took advantage.

¹ For the details recounted in the following paragraphs, and a generally thoughtful treatment of Peabody, see Jürgen Herbst, "Francis Greenwood Peabody: Harvard's Theologian of the Social Gospel," *HTR* 54 (1961) 45–69.

Correspondingly Peabody became a lifelong opponent of traditional orthodoxies and allied himself to idealism and evolutionary forms of thought.

Peabody's interests led him, as they did all serious theologians and philosophers in America in the 1870s and before, to Germany for a year's study, after which he returned to the U.S. and was ordained. Soon thereafter he was named an Overseer of Harvard College. In this role he was immediately active in a push to bring Eliot's new elective curriculum to the Divinity School. Only a few years later, in 1880 under the leadership of Dean Everett, Peabody was hired to the Faculty of Divinity to participate in the renovation of the curricula in both the Divinity School and the College. Notably, he was the first faculty member to deploy the new case method of teaching in his courses on Social Ethics.

The inaugural issue of the *Harvard Theological Review* came out less than two years after Peabody left the Divinity deanship to William Wallace Fenn. The endowment that facilitated the creation of the *Review* derived from a bequest by Mildred Everett, daughter of Dean Charles Everett. Everett, also a liberal and a proponent of idealism, had hired Peabody in 1880, and was followed by Peabody in the Dean's chair upon his untimely death in 1900. In her bequest Mildred Everett attributed the plan for "an undenominational theological review" to her father. No doubt Peabody's enthusiasm for the new publication derived in part from his appreciation for his former colleague and the new era in the Divinity School they had worked together to build.

Peabody's lead essay in that first number, "The Call to Theology," estimates the current state of affairs in culture and society, specifying both the need for theology and what kind was in demand. January 1908 was a noteworthy year in Harvard history, not for the beginning of *HTR* but rather for the formal foundation and eventual opening of the Harvard Business School. Peabody adverts to the cultural prominence of management and commerce in his opening paragraph, noting that while the "machinery" of the churches "revolves with energy," it does not appear to be "geared into the wheels of the working world; and the deliberations of the theologians are frankly regarded by great numbers of people with indifference, if not contempt."² Peabody then recounts the retort of a distinguished railway president, upon being told that a gifted youth had taken up the study of theology, who replied "'Why does not so gifted a man devote himself to something that is real?'" The challenge for theology, and the untimeliness of a theological review, seem more than evident.

Peabody lays the blame for the perceived irrelevance of theology squarely on the shoulders of the academy. Noting that education for law, medicine and science had been fundamentally revised in a generation to meet the expansion of knowledge, he notes by contrast that education for the ministry has for the most part remained unadjusted to the contemporary world, training ministers "in subjects which they cannot use," leaving them "ignorant of much of what

² Francis Greenwood Peabody, "The Call to Theology," *HTR* 1 (1908) 1–9, at 1.

they need to know.”³ “Theology,” he writes, “has presented itself to their minds as a record of controversies which once were living fires but are now extinct volcanoes.”⁴ They turn, correspondingly, to other more fertile fields, and become only “administrators” of congregations rather than theologians. Some nonetheless choose to be theologians, but these Peabody chastises for reserving little time for study, and remaining detached from the modern world. No one, in his view, was taking on the serious intellectual problem facing both the churches and society.⁵

Peabody saw the Christian church as a whole to be at a tipping point with regard to the contemporary challenge. Peabody writes that either the church “must frankly retreat from the pretence of leadership under the conditions of the present age, or it must become an efficient organ of rational and candid thought.” Not only are ministers needing of religious fervor and practical activity, he notes, but even more they require “a new accession of intellectual power, the capacity to translate the message of the timeless into the dialect of the present age.”⁶ Hence the real challenge for the churches from his point of view is the challenge to modernize, both theology itself broadly construed, but also the processes of education that form the ministry and leadership of the churches. It is to this large social and ecclesial end, ultimately, that Peabody issues his call to theology, introducing *The Harvard Theological Review*.

* * *

Considering the theological offerings in this *Review* over a century, it is somewhat surprising, even refreshing, to see such clarity of purpose, such a comprehensive and focused conception, and such energy as one finds in Peabody’s opening paeans, as well as in the first decade of issues of *HTR*. When I came to the *Review* as a reader in the late 1980s, based on my reading I surmised that it was a somewhat eclectic collection of high quality academic pieces, particularly strong in Biblical studies, but with solid and consistent if more occasional contributions in theology, history of Christianity, and the philosophy of religion. As the 1990s wore on I added to this the expectation of periodic essays that broached wider aspects of the study of Religion, Jewish Studies in particular, which grew then in frequency of appearance.

Looking at all the issues of the *Review* to date, as well as the circumstances of its founding and its changes over time, have led me, however, to revise my understanding somewhat. As is often the case, history is more complicated than one initially assumes, and reality somewhat surprising. In what follows I want to reflect on the first century of *HTR*, with particular focus on its contributions to theology, by observing several features. First, I will analyze in some detail the early theological profile of the *Review* in its first decade or so, and note the changes that ensue with the cultural challenges to the liberalism that was the *raison d’être* of the

³ Ibid., 2.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁶ Ibid.

publication's beginning. Second, I will chart schematically some of the ebbs and flows in the offerings of the *Review* in theology and related fields, attempting to illuminate how the *Review* became what we now are familiar with. Thirdly, I want to reflect, albeit indirectly, on what a history of theology in the past century would look like if the *Harvard Theological Review* were our only source for telling such a story. And finally, I want to take up the question of the purpose and prospects of the *Review* diachronically, comparing the year of its founding with our own situation, and evaluating what I see to be the prospects of theology in *The Harvard Theological Review* in a second century of publication.

The First Period of the *HTR*

The rationale of Peabody's "Call" suggests clearly that the Faculty intended the new *Theological Review* to serve a crucial theological and pedagogical role, not only for the community of Harvard graduates in Divinity but also for the wider and society. When one looks closely at the first issue of the *Review* and subsequent numbers, one can see that dual intent manifest, in that the *HTR* from the outset provided a) a review of advances in knowledge in fields related to the theological enterprise, and b) theological and philosophical reflections that were themselves out to integrate and revise theology and Christianity's self-reflection in light of these advances.

The opening number, *HTR* 1:1, begins with Peabody's "Call to Theology," articulating the modern liberal agenda of the *Review* and its rationale. This is followed by a review of "modern ideas" of God by Arthur McGiffert from Union Theological Seminary, which seeks to instruct the reader in contemporary tendencies concerning philosophy of religion and doctrines of God. Without taking a strong position, this piece maps a contrast between the metaphysical trajectory funding idealism, which it identifies as beginning with Spinoza and leading through Schleiermacher and Hegel, and the moral view found from Kant through Ritschl.⁷ Immediately following this analytical essay is a piece titled "Is our Protestantism Still Protestant" by William Brown, also of Union, which seeks to interpret contemporary liberal protestant thought both as true to the reformation but also properly true to modernity and its revisionary task. Most interesting in this piece, I should note, is the surprising observation that the declaration of Papal infallibility at the first Vatican Council in 1870 indicates a "public recognition of the emancipation of the [Roman Catholic] Church from the tyranny of the past." Brown notes that although this power was then being used against Catholic Modernists in a reactionary way, its real significance lies in its freeing the church to respond to the new situation that attends modernity, hence placing Catholicism and liberal Protestantism in similar steads in the sense

⁷ Arthur C. McGiffert, "Modern Ideas of God," *HTR* 1 (1908) 10–27.

that both are now open to revising theology in relation to the new world the modern era has ushered in.⁸

Also in that first issue are a review essay in New Testament studies on synoptic criticism and a survey of recent archaeological work in Palestine. These two pieces are followed by an article from Thomas Carver, an economist then lecturing at Harvard, which probes human anthropology and particularly human evil from the perspective of economics' understanding of the human situation. Closing out the number is an essay by a local pastor on "Divine Providence."

This range and format from the first number of *HTR* is roughly paralleled through the first years of the *Review*. Subsequent issues frequently include reviews of the state of particular fields of study such as Psychology of Religion, and review articles on recent books in systematic theology, New and Old Testament studies. Indeed, from 1914 to 1920 the publication even offered stand-alone book reviews, a practice never duplicated since. While academic authors predominated, often in these early years an issue would conclude with an essay by a noted local pastor on a fairly general topic, ordinarily approached from a liberal perspective. Additionally, specialists in non-theological fields appeared not infrequently in the pages.

Also prominent in the early volumes of *HTR* are transcripts of noteworthy talks or presentations delivered at the Divinity School, the Lowell Institute or elsewhere around Cambridge and Boston, thus making available to a wider public the substance of discourse and instruction that was predominating at Harvard. Notable among these was the occasional appearance of the Ingersoll Lecture on the Immortality of Man, and the Dudleian Lecture, each of which had set topics and occurred annually at the Divinity School. Hence the pedagogical function of *HTR* literally as a review—of the current state of the discourse in a range of fields, of the proceedings around Harvard, or most generally, of the very intellectual atmosphere and orientation that the Faculty found valuable and salutary—was conspicuous.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of *HTR* in its first decade was the clear existence of a distinctive theological profile, namely the modernist, liberal orientation announced in the opening essay by Professor Peabody. This is not to say that there was agreement among authors on what the content of that modern liberal theology should be. Indeed, the differences of opinion among the authors writing in the journal are significant, with authors such as Josiah Royce and Ralph Barton Perry, both of Harvard, for example, differing significantly on how much and what in particular of Christianity is to be given credence, and others in the liberal fold arguing from the perspectives of either idealism or pragmatism, defending the distinctiveness of Christianity, or arguing more generally for a more generic philosophy of religion as the eventual endpoint. But what was clear from the beginning was that this review, this venue, was committed to the modern liberal and predominantly Protestant enterprise, and that indeed this *Review* was understood as a social organ for the

⁸ William Adams Brown, "Is Our Protestantism Still Protestant?" *HTR* 1 (1908) 28–47, at 42.

advancement of that cause for the greater benefit of theological education, the church and society.

There were a number of noteworthy essays in the first decade of the *Review*, several of which I wish to highlight. Illustrating the modernist bent of the *Review*, in the final issue of volume 2 in 1909 the lead article was “The Religion of the Future” from none other than Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University, one of his two eventual publications in *HTR*. The article was the transcript of the concluding lecture of the Summer School in Theology of 1909 given by President Eliot. This brief piece is a classic of theological Modernism, on the order of Shailer Matthew’s 1924 *The Faith of Modernism*.⁹ Eliot offers his own sketch of the shape of the religion of the future that stands in front of the twentieth century as its likely telos. He defines its characteristics largely negatively, noting that a) it will not depend on authority, b) it will not personify the primitive forces of nature, c) it will not worship any ancestors, teachers or rulers, nor will it identify anyone with the eternal deity, d) it will not orient towards personal welfare or salvation of the individual, but rather the betterment of the collective future, e) it will not be propitiary, sacrificial or expiatory, f) it will not understand the deity anthropomorphically, and finally g) it will not be gloomy, ascetic, or maledictory. In place of all these, Eliot sees the religion of the future to be dominated by a new thought of God as monotheistic, but in concert with modern science (remember that Eliot is a chemist), it will comprehend God as an eternal energy, taking literally Paul’s claim that “in him we live and move and have our being.” As concerns humans, the future religion will be what Eliot calls “an all-saints religion,” paying homage to righteous and loving persons in the past and present who have pursued the good, in place of holding out immortality, other-worldly or supernatural salvation. It will approach evil from the side of prevention, not justification, and focus on the uplifting features of human goodness and interaction, emphasizing love and hope. In short, it is a classically modernist, human oriented conception of theology and religion, and one which Eliot himself appears to hope that Harvard can assist in bringing to fruition.

With the theological bent of the *Review* so clear, it is not particularly surprising whom and what topics we find populating the journal early on. Royce appears twice in its pages before his death in 1916, James B. Pratt and Ralph Barton Perry, students of both Royce and William James and participants in the discussions around pragmatism, write frequently in the *Review*. One of the most noteworthy early publications is an article by Ernst Troeltsch in 1912 dedicated overtly “to the memory of William James,” in which Troeltsch compares William James’s new empirical approach to the Philosophy of Religion with what he calls the European Platonist approach to such study, which he identifies himself with and advocates. The only appearance of Troeltsch himself in *HTR*, Troeltsch seems to have wanted to publish this appreciative but critical piece at James’s home institution, both to honor him but also to engage the most serious audience conceivable about the

⁹ Charles W. Eliot, “The Religion of the Future,” *HTR* 2 (1909) 389–407.

issues at stake. A classic statement of Troeltsch's own view, as well as a sympathetic appreciation of James's, this article remains well worth reading today.¹⁰

Another remarkable piece from the first year of the *Review* is "Medievalism and Modernism" by George Tyrrell, published in the third number in 1908.¹¹ Along with Alfred Loisy, Tyrrell was one of the two major figures in the emergence of Catholic Modernism, as well as a critic of Adolf von Harnack's widely discussed conception of the essence of Christianity. Tyrrell was expelled from the Society of Jesus in 1906 for his teachings, and suspended from the sacraments in 1907. This piece presents a sober and poignant defense of Catholic Modernism from the perspective of one who has suffered the full sanctions of the church, while still maintaining his core beliefs in Christ and the Catholic church. In response to Pope Pius X's 1907 encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* condemning the modernists, Tyrrell carefully appropriates the term, distinguishing it as only aptly applying to one who believes, as he does, in the possibility of a critical synthesis of Catholic Christianity (though notably not Catholic theology) and modern culture, and not all of those targeted by the broad sweep of Pius X's encyclical. In the essay Tyrrell both rebuts the encyclical and other defenders of Pius X's position, and seeks to justify his own position as a Catholic one, as well as to uncover the key distinction between the modernists and those he terms "medievalists," meaning those then considered orthodox. For Tyrrell this distinction lies chiefly in the modernists' recognition of the reality of historical change, and hence the recognition that the church itself has and must continue to change over time.

I mentioned that the piece reads as poignant. This is partly due to the fact that Tyrrell, who was accused of Protestantism and hence a forsaking of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church, had to turn to a Protestant American publication of the most liberal order to find both voice and audience. Adding to this is the fact that only a year later, Tyrrell was dead at the age of only forty-eight. Nothing else that I have read in *Harvard Theological Review* struck me as quite so emblematic of the state of things theological at a particular time.

The last example among the early pieces I want to draw attention to is a trio of articles published between 1912 and 1914 which exhibit the vibrancy, health, and indeed the quickly gained stature of the *Harvard Theological Review*. The first essay is a classic piece from the pen of Benjamin B. Warfield, the youngest of the Princeton theologians who defended biblical inspiration and the idea of scriptural inerrancy. Warfield, a long-standing critic of liberalism, submitted a fifty-one page attack on the liberal theological tradition entitled "Christless Christianity."¹² The article was, notably, given second billing behind Ernst Troeltsch's piece in memory of William James in volume five, number four. Warfield offers a comprehensive

¹⁰ Ernst Troeltsch, "Empiricism and Platonism in the Philosophy of Religion: to the Memory of William James," *HTR* 5 (1912) 401–22.

¹¹ George Tyrrell, "Medievalism and Modernism," *HTR* 1 (1908) 304–24.

¹² Benjamin B. Warfield, "Christless Christianity," *HTR* 5 (1912) 423–73.

critique, beginning with an analysis of the origins of theological liberalism in Gotthold Lessing's eighteenth century rendition of the problems of history for understanding Christ. Warfield moves forward, ultimately to the Ritschl school, Harnack and Troeltsch on the "essence" question, and D. C. MacIntosh and Matthews on the idea of a Christianity not only without Christ, but even potentially without Jesus. Warfield asserts, to the contrary, that as Christianity is defined by redemption through a substitutionary atonement in the blood of Christ, these thinkers are not, in fact, Christians at all.¹³ The essay is vintage Warfield (or "B. B." as he was known when I was at PTS in the 1980s) both in rhetorical style and in the strategy of bringing the critique right into the lair of the beast. In 1912 that den already was already located at *HTR*.

Warfield's salvo went unreturned for a year, but in 1914 MacIntosh responded programmatically with his essay "What is the Christian Religion?"¹⁴ MacIntosh does not break new theological ground, except in his central critique that Warfield is begging the question that the modern tradition itself is facing. The essay nonetheless stands as a clear and concise summation both of what is distinctive about the modern theological trajectory, and of MacIntosh's own reasons for continuing to call himself a Christian, and on what terms. Warfield lost little time rejoining, appearing for his second and final time in *HTR* in the fourth number of that volume with a fifty-nine page piece reasserting the centrality of the cross.¹⁵ The exchange is historically instructive, offering concise access to the core components of the Princeton Theology and its liberal counterparts, both of which have proved so formative to the subsequent theological scene. It also illustrates the openness to real debate of the *Review* in its early years.

■ Ebbs and Flows of Theology in the *Review*

Although the first nine years of the *HTR* were dynamic and fulsome, from a theological perspective, by 1917 both the tenor and the content of theological discussion in the *Review* changed dramatically. Volume 10 opened, not unintentionally I assume, with an historical piece entitled "Quietism," and the offerings that year theologically were both slim and oriented to historical questions and subject matter.¹⁶ The United States entered the "war to end all wars" on 4 April of that year just as the second number was issued. Luther and Augustine were the prominent theological subjects in the 1917 volume, with original sin front and center in the latter, and the only liberal figure who was the subject of an article was Kant; the topic in his case was morality. The following year was equally void of novel theological contributions and liberal dynamism, including only reviews of the work of Loisy,

¹³ *Ibid.*, 472–73.

¹⁴ Douglas Clyde MacIntosh, "What is the Christian Religion?" *HTR* 7 (1914) 16–46.

¹⁵ Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Essence of Christianity and the Cross of Christ," *HTR* 7 (1914) 538–94.

¹⁶ See Rufus Jones, "Quietism," *HTR* 10 (1917) 1–51.

R. B. Perry and Phillips Brooks in what now read, in historical perspective, to be something like eulogies for the vibrancy of the modernist and progressive era at the conclusion of the Great War.

The “house theology” of *HTR* did not completely fade from view, but it did recede significantly over the next decades. Reliable contributors oriented more to the philosophical or psychological side of matters, such as James B. Pratt, Ralph Barton Perry and Julius Seelye Bixler, continued to publish routinely. But the balance of articles shifted significantly, both from: a) the predomination of theology overall to that of biblical studies; and b) within theology, from contemporary systematic and philosophical theology to an emphasis on and domination of historical theology. Thus the particular function of the *HTR* as a motive force for the modernization of both theological education and contemporary theology within the church that Peabody had envisioned, and the first decade of the *Review* had delivered, effectively failed by the early 1920s. I should note as well that this challenge to progressive and liberal theology itself went essentially unremarked in the *Review*, leaving the reader only to infer its reality from the abrupt shifts in subject matter and offerings.

The Divinity School between the mid-twenties and the early 1950s was not what one would call a thriving institution; certainly it was nothing like the relative heyday out of which emerged the *Review*. Typically the *Review* over this time period might include one essay in systematic theology or philosophy of religion per year, as well as several pieces that are better classified as historical theology.¹⁷ The quality of these offerings remained high, but the coherence of the pieces published, and hence the notion of the *Review* being the locus of a vibrant conversation, is hard to intuit. Some volumes, such as volume 28 from 1934, and volume 30 from 1936, had no theological offerings at all for the whole year. Most notable overall was the historical attention offered to American theologians and movements, such as Perry Miller’s fine articles on Solomon Stoddard, Jonathan Edwards, and Theodore Parker between 1941 and 1961.¹⁸ Emerson too received significant attention, and by the 1950s it was clear that *HTR* was a significant publication for American historical theology and church history, as well as for more historically oriented pieces on topics in European historical theology. Interestingly, Dante and Milton were recurrent topics.

As the Divinity School Faculty began to grow again in the mid 1950s, with particular focus on contemporary ecumenical movements, in parallel the number of theological and philosophical offerings also began to increase. Volumes 60 to

¹⁷ The shift in focus to historical theology coincided with Professor George La Piana joining the Faculty in 1916, having come to the U.S. from Italy as something of a refugee from the Roman Catholic Modernist controversy in which he was a significant figure. It is somewhat ironic that the inclusion of a modernist on the Faculty would enhance a shift away from contemporary theology, though this is not inconsistent with Modernism’s historicism.

¹⁸ See Perry Miller, “Solomon Stoddard, 1643–1729,” *HTR* 34 (1941) 277–320; *ibid.*, “Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart,” *HTR* 41 (1948) 123–45; and *ibid.*, “Theodore Parker: Apostasy Within Liberalism,” 54 (1961) 275–95.

67 (from 1967–1974) were particularly noteworthy for the dynamism of their theological offerings, and the renewed focus on contemporary matters both theological and cultural. These were, I should note, the last seven years of the editorship of Professor and then Dean Krister Stendahl, concurrent with the beginning of his deanship. Stendahl was supported by Professor Richard R. Niebuhr as an associate editor for theological and historical contributions. The orientation to the *Zeitgeist* was most evident in volume 62, which opened in January 1969 with the only title over the century of publication to use the word “psychedelic,” Walter Pahnke’s Ingersoll Lecture, “The Psychedelic Mystical Experience in the Human Encounter with Death.”¹⁹ Pahnke had completed his Ph.D. at Harvard in 1963 in Religion and Society, conducting the famous controlled LSD studies under the direction of Timothy Leary, including Huston Smith as a subject. He had been invited to offer the lecture by Dean Samuel Miller just days before Miller’s untimely death.

The Faculty’s overall theological concern with contemporary issues was also evident in the dedication of a complete number in 1971 to Black Theology, which included, among other interesting contributions, a particularly pointed piece by Bill Jones.²⁰ The following year’s fourth number was likewise topically focused, this time on ethics, with Arthur Dyck guest-editing the volume, and Preston Williams, Robin Lovin, Ron Green and David Little all writing in the issue. Topically-focused issues have been few and far between in the history of *HTR*, although current editor François Bovon has done this at least three times; these two are in any case particularly noteworthy.

By the mid-seventies, the brief revival of this concerted contemporary focus to the *Review* settled back into a now more consistent appearance of pieces of quality in theology and the philosophy of religion, with a resumed and continued emphasis on historical matters. The social orientation that had gripped the School, the culture, and even the *HTR* in the late sixties and early seventies slipped loose again, and the high quality but general publication that we are all familiar with came squarely into view. But for the addition of an emphasis on Jewish thought that came in the late eighties and early nineties, presumably along with the inauguration of the List Professorship at the School, the tenor and scope of the *Review* from the theological perspective has proved remarkably consistent and reliable over the last decades.

■ Twentieth Century Theology as Seen Via *HTR*

As I noted above, the shape of modern liberal theology in the decade before WW I is fairly evident in *HTR* with regard to Catholic Modernism and Protestant liberalism, both the American and European movements within these. Interestingly, however,

¹⁹ Walter Pahnke, “The Psychedelic Mystical Experience in the Human Encounter with Death,” *HTR* 62 (1969) 1–21.

²⁰ See William Jones, “Theodicy and Methodology in Black Theology: A Critique of Washington, Cone, and Cleage” *HTR* 64 (1971) 541–57.

developments in European theology that become particularly important later in the twentieth century—here I have in mind the work of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, as well as that of Paul Tillich both before and after his emigration to the United States—are little in evidence. None of these authors, Tillich included, ever published anything directly in *HTR*. Moreover, little is in fact said of them until well after their prominence had been assured and, excepting Barth, their primary contributions made. There is a single review essay of this new theological position entitled “The ‘Theology of Crisis’: Remarks on a Recent Movement in German Theology” published in 1926 by Gustav Krüger, a professor of church history in Giessen, followed by another quite critical review essay on German theology by Julius Seelye Bixler some four years later.²¹ But the *Review* only has two more articles taking up the significance of German crisis theology (or neo-orthodoxy) before the mid sixties, making it evident that this major movement in twentieth century Protestant theology was effectively not transpiring through or made available to its readership via the pages of the *HTR*.

One might surmise that this was a feature of the American orientation of the *Review*, assuming that while movements in European philosophy and Protestant theology were being ignored, American players were well-represented. But this thesis is not well-attested either. I already mentioned the fact that Paul Tillich, who was even a member of the Faculty at Harvard (though not the Divinity School per se), never writes in the *Review*. Additional to this, neither Reinhold Niebuhr nor H. Richard Niebuhr ever are authors of articles included in the *Review*, though Reinhold Niebuhr is, I should note, more than occasionally discussed, at points in the same breath as Barth and Brunner as the antipode of liberal theology. Later theological figures at Yale such as Hans Frei and George Lindbeck are also missing from the annals, with the exception of one early article on medieval nominalism by Lindbeck in 1959.²² Ronald Thiemann, sometime Dean and Harvard’s current expert on the more recent Yale theology, has to date only published one article in *HTR*, his inaugural convocation address as Dean on theological education.

Chicago fares little better than Yale as a source for or subject of theological discussion. There is one essay by Bernard Meland, and one later by James Gustafson, but nothing from Henry Nelson Wieman, Schubert Ogden, Langdon Gilkey, or David Tracy, all of whom would figure in any account of twentieth century American theology. Chicago, like Yale, did have its own outlet for theological writing, and it seems clear that those and other venues, rather than *HTR*, seemed the relevant places for their faculty to publish and be discussed.

Turning to more topically-oriented movements, James Cone never has written directly in *HTR*, although as I noted above there was an issue devoted to the

²¹ Gustav Krüger, “The ‘Theology of Crisis’: Remarks on a Recent Movement in German Theology,” *HTR* 19 (1926) 288–58.

²² See George Lindbeck, “Nominalism and the Problem of Meaning as Illustrated by Pierre D’Ailly on Predestination and Justification,” *HTR* 52 (1959) 43–60.

emergence of Black Theology and subsequent attention to it. Feminist theology fared even less well. Mary Daly, Judith Plaskow, and Letty Russell are all missing from the list of contributors until Russell appeared in volume 99, number 4 in 2006, a special issue celebrating fifty years of women at Harvard Divinity School. Professor Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, at Harvard since 1987, only appears twice in *HTR*, and then only after she joined the Faculty. In contrast to Black Theology, feminist theology was little treated as a subject over the decades since Daly's *The Church and the Second Sex* appeared in 1968. Though I have by no means been comprehensive, it seems clear that a history of 20th Century Christian (even Protestant, or liberal Protestant) theology written solely from the evidence of *Harvard Theological Review* would read quite differently than one would otherwise expect.

There appear in the *Review* a number of other notable theological figures and contributions, many of which are connected to the happenings and Faculty at Harvard. Richard R. Niebuhr published both an advance excerpt of his 1963 book *Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion*, which effectively launched the revival in Schleiermacher studies, and a preparatory study for his 1974 *Experiential Religion*. This was followed a decade later with a typically close study of symbols that related to his later sustained writing.²³ Likewise between 1966 and 1972 Gordon Kaufman published three essays in *HTR* that worked out significant moves and ideas for his emerging reconception of theology as human construction.²⁴ But after 1972, none of Kaufman's significant theological work appears in the *Review* directly. George Rupp, Margaret Miles, and later Francis Schüssler Fiorenza published an equivalent number of offerings as Kaufman and Niebuhr, though none were as central as Niebuhr's or Kaufman's to their research programs.²⁵

Of more recent additions to the theology faculty, Sarah Coakley published only one item in *HTR* during her time on the faculty, and that was in connection with a number dedicated to a recent conference on patristics the proceedings of which appeared in the 100th volume of *HTR*.²⁶ Amy Hollywood, Nick Conostas, the

²³ See Richard R. Niebuhr, "Schleiermacher: Theology as Human Reflection," *HTR* 55 (1962), 21–49; idem, "The Widened Heart," *HTR* 62 (1969) 127–54; and idem, "The Tragic Play of Symbols," *HTR* 75 (1982) 25–53.

²⁴ See Gordon D. Kaufman, "On the Meaning of 'God': Transcendence Without Mythology" *HTR* 59 (1966) 105–32; idem, "On the Meaning of 'Act of God,'" *HTR* 61 (April 1968) 175–201; and idem, "A Problem for Theology: The Concept of Nature," *HTR* 65 (1972) 337–66.

²⁵ See George Rupp, "The Idealism of Jonathan Edwards," *HTR* 62 (1969) 209–26; idem, "Religious Pluralism in the Context of an Emerging World Culture," *HTR* 66 (1973) 207–18; Margaret Miles, "Theology, Anthropology, and the Human Body in Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion," *HTR* 74 (1981) 303–23; eadem, "The Rope Breaks When it is Tightest": Luther on the Body, Consciousness, and the Word," *HTR* 77 (1984) 239–58; eadem, "Santa Maria Maggiore's Fifth-Century Mosaics: Triumphal Christianity and the Jews," *HTR* 86 (1993) 155–75; Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Schleiermacher and the Construction of a Contemporary Roman Catholic Foundational Theology," *HTR* 89 (1996) 175–94; eadem, "Religion: A Contested Site in Theology and the Study of Religion," *HTR* 93 (2000) 7–34; and eadem, "A Roman Catholic Perspective on the Offense of Revelation: A Response to William Abraham," *HTR* 95 (2002), 265–71.

²⁶ See Sarah Coakley, "Disputed Questions in Patristic Trinitarianism," *HTR* 100 (2007) 125–38.

present author (David Lamberth), and Kevin Madigan each appear in the *Review*, some more than once.²⁷ Notably, Harvey Cox, the most recent incumbent of the Hollis Professorship and a faculty member for some four decades, has never appeared directly in the *Harvard Theological Review*. Relatedly, I should note that liberation theology, which Cox has been greatly interested in and which was a major movement in theology in the second half of the twentieth century, primarily in Roman Catholicism but also influential for Protestant theology, is referenced extraordinarily infrequently, never, as far as I can see, receiving focused treatment in even an article in the *Review*.²⁸

Other major figures in twentieth-century theology and philosophy of religion do appear in the *Review*, often by virtue of the continued practice of periodically publishing named lectures at the Divinity School. John Smith, Jürgen Moltmann, and Wolfhart Pannenberg all appear with significant essays by virtue of the Ingersoll Lectureship, which, in contrast to other endowed lectures, has publication mandated by its terms.²⁹ Paul Ricœur's Dudleian Lecture marks his only contribution, a valuable piece on revelation.³⁰ More recently Michael Welker's Lentz Lecture is there.³¹ In addition to contributions from others such as George H. Williams, rounding out the majority of the other theological contributions published are a significant number of fine articles in a range of fields written by graduates of the doctoral programs at Harvard, at times while still in residence, but more often after leaving Harvard. Notable among these are contributions by Albert Blackwell, Mark C. Taylor, David Little, Wayne Proudfoot, Paula Cooley, and Sam Preuss.

²⁷ See Nicolas P. Constatas, "The Last Temptation of Satan: Divine Deception in Greek Patristic Interpretations of the Passion Narrative," *HTR* 97 (2004) 139–63; Amy Hollywood, "'Beautiful as a Wasp': Angela of Foligno and Georges Bataille," *HTR* 92 (1999) 219–36; eadem, "Acute Melancholia," *HTR* 99 (2006) 381–406; David C. Lamberth, "Intimations of the Finite: Thinking Pragmatically at the End of Modernity," *HTR* 90 (1997) 205–23; idem, "Putting 'Experience' to the Test in Theological Reflection," *HTR* 93 (2000) 67–77; idem, "Discernment and Practice: Questions for a Logic of Revelation: Response to William Abraham," *HTR* 95 (2002) 273–76; Kevin Madigan, "Ancient and High-Middle Ages Interpretations of Jesus in Gethsemane: Some Reflections on Tradition and Continuity in Christian Thought," *HTR* 88 (1995) 157–73; and idem, "*Christus Nesciens*? Was Christ Ignorant of the Day of Judgment? Aryan and Orthodox Interpretation of Mark 13:32 in the Latin West," *HTR* 96 (2003) 255–78.

²⁸ George H. Williams mentions liberation theology in connection to Vatican II in two articles. See Williams, "The Ecumenical Intentions of Pope John Paul II: The Third of the Four Quadrennial Lectures Under the Bequest of George Paul Dudley, 1750," *HTR* 75 (1982) 141–76; and idem, "The World Council of Churches and Its Vancouver Theme: 'Jesus Christ the Life of the World' in Historical Perspective," *HTR* 76 (1983) 1–51.

²⁹ See John E. Smith, "The Permanent Truth in the Idea of Natural Revelation: The Dudleian Lecture for 1960," *HTR* 54 (1961) 1–19; Jürgen Moltmann, "Resurrection as Hope," *HTR* 61 (1968) 129–47; and Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Constructive and Critical Functions of Christian Eschatology," *HTR* 77 (1984) 119–39.

³⁰ Paul Ricœur, "Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation," *HTR* 70 (1977) 1–37.

³¹ Michael Welker, "Who is Jesus Christ for Us Today?" *HTR* 95 (2002) 129–46.

■ Prospects of Theology in a Second Century of *HTR*

Having surveyed the waxing and waning activity over the century of *HTR* just completed, as well as considered some observations on the topography of inclusion and omission relative to the history of theology of the twentieth century, it seems warranted now to close by offering some assessment of the success of *HTR* relative to theology over the last century, and to inquire into the prospects of theology in *HTR* for the next decades.

As to the question of how successful a review *HTR* has proven, I read the results to be somewhat mixed. If one begins from Professor Peabody's "Call to Theology," with its dual interest in renovating both theological education and the church, I am at something of a loss to estimate the *Review* a success on its own terms. The aim Peabody identifies is large, even lofty, and certainly more than one might reasonably expect a simple quarterly serial to realize; indeed Peabody himself understood this, as well as the enormity of the task. But if we break down the components of Peabody's understanding, and indeed the practical application of them in the first decade of the *Review*, we can see that the attempt to forge a specific theological outlook and carry on a particular kind of contemporary conversation about Christianity engaged with the world, soon fell short of the mark. What is most distinctive about the early volumes of *HTR* is that they clearly kept in view the broader intended audience that lay beyond the walls of what we might call academia's first tier. By this I mean that the *Review*, with its apparently commissioned, somewhat didactic, topical "review" essays and its collection of public lectures from around the greater Harvard milieu, sought to export to a wider and not merely academic world a discussion that was being carefully framed and intentionally shaped as a new thing at Harvard. The spirit of carefully crafting the intellectual conditions for a new type of "learned minister" and a new and engaged form of theological education was much in evidence then, and *HTR* was in large part its organ of communication.

But by the mid 1920s, the scope and purpose of the *Review* had clearly and definitively shifted, and the audience appears much more exclusively to be framed by the editors as a solely academic one, and one mostly—to the presumed chagrin of Peabody—with predominantly historical concerns. I have not investigated the readership of the *Harvard Theological Review* over its history, but reading back from the volumes themselves, I would surmise that the intended reader, to the extent that he (or she) was imagined, shifts from being a church-engaged minister or theological educator, with some academics presumed to be reading as well, to the latter group of dedicated scholars alone being the intended audience, with the ministerial readership looking on. The aptly chosen title of "Review" thus to my eye became an historical anomaly within the first two decades.

Since this shift occurred, the *Review* appears to have functioned as do so many other successful and highly respectable academic journals, primarily evaluating received submissions and publishing only those of the highest caliber, but not

going out of its way to shape the submissions. (Perhaps Arthur Darby Nock did differently in *New Testament Studies*.) From the theological perspective, what is particularly remarkable is the fact that after the first period, it does not appear that *HTR* has been the locus for any particular and sustained theological discussions or controversies. Indeed, the choices of both Troeltsch and Benjamin B. Warfield to publish their particular pieces in *HTR*, and initiate certain discussions, which were taken up in both cases, does not seem to have been frequently replicated. Theological controversies, then, seem to have always been drawn elsewhere, and are only treated secondarily, if at all, in *HTR*.

Turning back to the question of the educational value of the *Review* for a moment, I think it is fair to say that while *HTR* had by no means been particularly representative of the state of theological discussion at a given time over most of its history, it has proved to be largely informative and interesting in regards to its offerings for anyone who happened to be reading. Somewhat analogous to President Eliot's idea of an elective educational system, *HTR* has offered a wide if still eclectic range of offerings to any given reader over its numbers and volumes, and allowed readers to choose for themselves, and presumably, should they be interested, follow up on such matters more deeply in other theological publications. This is, therefore, a publication with significant intellectual and pedagogical value for one interested in theology; however, it is not necessarily a must-read either in the way Peabody envisioned, or the way many academic publications function vis à vis particular fields. This is, I suspect, probably a markedly different estimation than one would give of the "must-read" aspect from the perspective of *New Testament Studies* over this same century.

Whither and where-to for the next decade and century? From the perspective of theology, broadly construed, and the philosophy of religion, I would note two desiderata. (Both of these derive from my observations concerning the two most vibrant theological periods in the *Review's* first century.) First, assuming one wants to retain the broad scope, I would suggest that more be actively done to animate sustained conversations around particular topics. It strikes me as unlikely that *HTR* would become the "must-publish" location for some subset of issues in contemporary theology per se, in the way that, for example, *Modern Theology* has cornered a particular set of discussions. And, it strikes me that with the shape of theology at HDS at present intentionally plural rather than "school-oriented," it would be unlikely that we would soon again develop a "house theology" and thus be the locus for particular controversies. But it should be possible for *HTR* nonetheless to host ongoing, focused discussions over several numbers or issues in a way that deepens the tenor and value of the discussion beyond the stand-alone effect of the single articles currently appearing. This could be done either by more actively and topically commissioning or soliciting articles and contributions, or dedicating volumes to topical issues. This latter has been successfully pursued in the past by either dedicating an issue to a topic and amassing the material in

advance, or more recently by publishing major contributions from conferences held at Harvard. Both of these in my estimation generated vibrant intellectual and theological discussion within the pages that was valuable and desirable on its own terms. Were it done more concertedly, and more often, I think the theological value of the *Review* would increase.

Secondly, I am inclined to think that attending more overtly to the “review” aspect of the publication, but again in a somewhat more active than receptive way, is apt to be of value, at least from the theological perspective. Part of the dynamism of the early volumes of *HTR* was, to be sure, based on its focused agenda. But much of its contemporary quality was generated simply by placing one in the room at the Lowell Institute, or the closing days of the Summer School on Theology, or at the annual Dudleian or Ingersoll Lecture. Thus the wide and varied scope of the *Review* could be capitalized on by more closely mirroring the broad range of events at Harvard and around Cambridge. Particularly since the recent revisioning of the *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* there is competition at *HDS* for where to publish the record of the many things that transpire in these halls, and there are questions about what best should reach which audience. But from the perspective of the health and prospects of *HTR*, I would say that publishing more selected pieces from our activities, including more routinely the named lectures, would increase the vibrancy and timeliness of the theological offerings of the *Review*.

Despite the variations in focus, and the changing predominance, or lack thereof at points, of theology, I should note in closing that reading across the century of *HTR*, one cannot help but be struck by how consistent the quality has been of the many and varied pieces that were published. I can only attribute this to the extraordinary efforts of the exceptional scholars who have served as editors of the *Review* over its first century. Having read still only a fraction of the final product which emerged from their work, and that of the supporting editorial staff and advisors, I am impressed anew with the dedication, expertise, and sheer labor and love that it has taken to bring us what we have in one hundred years of *HTR*. I want to close, then, by thanking the editors we all have known in the last fifty years of the review, Dean and Professor Krister Stendahl (who fell ill and was unable to be at this celebration), Professor Helmut Koester, whom I had the pleasure to serve under as an editorial assistant, and Professor François Bovon. The work of these Faculty, and their predecessors, has been magnificent, and we shall only hope to continue in our good fortune for the decades ahead.

The Future of the *Harvard Theological Review* in a Global and Interreligious Age

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We celebrate the *Harvard Theological Review*'s 100th anniversary with admiration for this splendid journal; but we may also share the uncertainty Francis Greenwood Peabody expressed in the opening paragraph of the first article of the first issue:

The time may appear to many persons inopportune for the launching of a Journal of Theology. The tide of theological interest may seem to have ebbed so low as to leave no channel for such a venture; the professions of the ministry fails to win recruits; the queen of the sciences is deposed from her throne; critics are announcing the rout of the theological schools. The machinery of the churches, it is true, revolves with energy, but it does not seem to be geared into the wheels of the working world; and the deliberations of the theologians are frankly regarded by great numbers of people with indifference, if not with contempt.¹

The ebbing of interest in theology; the decline in vocations to ministry; the rout of theological schools (or their transmutation into departments of religious studies); the mix of indifference and contempt for theology: are we talking about 1908 or 2008? Perhaps both. While of course it would be harder still to imagine starting a new theological journal at Harvard today, our celebration unsurprisingly affords us the occasion for deliberation on the future of *Harvard Theological Review* (henceforth *HTR*), and whether we shall maintain its traditional focus or open it in an intentional fashion for the sake of an interreligious theological conversation much wider than has been typical of *HTR* thus far.

¹ Francis Greenwood Peabody, "The Call to Theology," *HTR* 1 (1908) 1.

To make sense of my topic—reflection on the future of *HTR* as a theological journal in an interreligious age—I have had to do my homework. For I come to this task as it were from the outside—as a Roman Catholic theologian, a scholar of Hinduism, at Harvard for less than three years—and, despite having published in *HTR* in 1987, 1992, and 2005, I had never before now had reason really to think about *HTR* and its particular culture, and I have had a lot to learn. But it is also true that I have started with the hope and expectation that *HTR* should remain *theological* in a way appropriate to and energized by *Harvard*. Harvard Divinity School (henceforth HDS), I suggest, is a place for a distinctive theological future, and *HTR* can be a prime instrument of the anticipated theology.

■ Sifting through the Past

To gain our glimpse of the future by way of prediction, I first had to look into the past: I needed to pay attention to the first 100 years, because much depends on *HTR*'s way of proceeding as stated and as fashioned in practice. Thus, I first had to sift through *HTR* over the decades, checking various words, looking for essays about various religions and for attitudes toward learning about religions. For example, I found a number of articles dealing with Hindu India: "Emerson from an Indian Point of View," Herambachandra Maitra (1911); "The Hindu Yoga-System," Charles Rockwell Lanman (1918); "The Significance of Bonhoeffer's Interest in India," William Jay Peck (1968); "Bathing in Krishna," Dennis Hudson (1985); "Extending the Canon: Some Implications of a Hindu Argument about Scripture," Francis X. Clooney (1992); "Ex Oriente Lux: Thoreau's Ecstasies and the Hindu Texts," Alan D. Hodder (1993); "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: A Case Study from Hinduism," by Arvind Sharma (2001); "Hindutva, Religious and Ethnocultural Minorities, and Indian-Christian Theology," Sathianathan Clarke (2002). I also found articles on India taking its place in the missionary discourse that is the predecessor to what we might today call "Global Christianity,"² insightful too, and surely relevant to the grounds and possibilities for interreligious study, were essays on comparative religion and history of religions.³

But interesting articles do not of themselves add up to a common theme or outlook. Early in my preparation of this lecture, and as I was reading these articles, I had hoped to be able to tease out the changing views toward world religions underlying them, and by that means also to generate a theory of where *HTR* has been interreligiously. On that basis too, I hoped to catch hold of the distinctive character of *HTR* as a journal in which religions have been and can in the future

² "The Protestant Missionary Propaganda in India," J. P. Jones (1915); "The Modern Missionary," James L. Barton (1915); "The Bible in Persian Translation: A Contribution to the History of Bible Translations in Persia and India," Walter J. Fischel (1952).

³ "The Category of Growth in Comparative Religion: A Critical Self-Examination," Raimundo Panikkar (1973); "The Harvard Way in the Study of Religion," William Darrow (1988); "Religion: A Contested Site in Theology and the Study of Religion," Francis Schüssler Fiorenza (2000).

be considered. But I found that the number of relevant articles was too small to serve as a basis for predicting trends. More importantly, I found also that since each and every article appeared without explanatory context—nothing like an editorial introduction that might have explained how this or that piece fit the overall view of *HTR*—it became clear that it was impossible to generate a theory about the “development of the understanding of world religions in *HTR*.” The essays stood without context, unexplained and self-standing, yielding hardly a clue predictive of trends in theological attitudes toward world religions.

So I looked then at least for a trend, guessing that perhaps *HTR* has in recent years been publishing more essays on world religions—in practice broadening the scope of the journal. Not so; rather, there has been a remarkable consistency in *HTR* from the start to now. There is a recurring ratio of articles related to Western religion, Christianity (and the biblical world and Judaism) as compared to articles touching upon other religions and cultures.⁴ In 1918 this ratio was 18:1; in 1948—15:1; in 1978—15:1; and, in 2003–2007, an average of 20:1. Attention to Asia and Africa, for instance, has been minimal for 100 years, and with striking consistency. Even if there has been no explicit exclusion of Asia and Africa, Hinduism and Buddhism, etc., obviously there has been a preference for the Christian West and the Bible. While this is so in part due to the availability of publishable essays, my guess was that it also had to do with *HTR*’s image of what counted as pertinent theological scholarship.

■ *HTR*’s Editorial Perspective

There would have been no need for guesswork were this minimalist interest in religions defended by a clear editorial stance regarding how the study of world religions fit into a theological journal. It is editorial policy, not the number of articles, that would indicate to us the point where change might have to be made, and so I then began to ask, How and under what standards was *HTR* shaped with respect to the wider world? What might the underlying guiding conversation have been? What was the “editorial agency” guiding *HTR*, such as led to its remarkable consistency, quality, and focus on the Western intellectual world? For this, I had to think about *HTR* in a different way, tracing its editorial policy. But it has also been hard to trace an intentional pattern underlying the history of *HTR*, and we can find only very slender policy clues, even in available statements of the purpose of *HTR*.

The earliest statement of *HTR*’s purpose seems to have been an announcement of the plan to publish a journal beginning on 1 January 1908. This announcement declares clearly the purpose and independence of *HTR*: “The scope of the review will be broad, including not only theology, in the wider meaning of the word, but the history and philosophy of religion, ethics, sociology, economics, and education”—a

⁴ This rather loose category is only for illustrative purposes, and I do not attempt seriously to categorize the range of items in *HTR*. Were one to focus solely on articles about Islam or Judaism, for instance, the ratio would of course be greater.

rich horizon for the journal, that we could imagine also characterizing the future of *HTR*. But the statement immediately goes on to a more specific concern: “in so far as these have a bearing on religious thought or the practical work of the Church.”⁵ There is a nondenominational flexibility, to be sure, but it is still a matter of serving “the Church” in practical, educative ways. I do not think there was a conscious shift away from such commitment at any given date, but nonetheless it is of great import whether or not responsibility to the Church, or something like a church, remained in place or not. The imagined audience for the new journal is broad, including not just academic scholars but also active ministers and laymen “who are interested in religious thought and in the place and function of religion in modern life.”⁶ The statement does indeed proclaim a certain independence—“the *Review* will not be the organ of any sect nor the advocate of any peculiar opinions, but will endeavor to enlist the cooperation and support of all who believe that the interpretation and application of religion present to every generation its own problems”—but this is independence for the Church, that the Church may “maintain its faith and fulfill its task,” since “the very spiritual life of the Church itself demands a continual thinking forward in the apprehension of the truth.”

In 1908, the opening dedication to Charles Carroll Everett according to the wishes of his daughter Mildred Everett announces “the establishment and maintenance of an undenominational theological review.”⁷ This seems to be a prediction true to the consequent history of *HTR*: an insistence on “theology,” but in a loose sense, being undenominational, non-denominational—and also universal, catholic—and yet still for the sake of the Church. In 1911 and thereafter, *HTR*’s scope was described in consistent terms: “discussions in the various fields of theological study and also in the history of religions, ethics, education, economics, and sociology, in their theological and religious aspects.” *HTR* is both focused and wide open, since it “is designed to serve the needs not only of clergymen and scholars, but of all who are interested in religious thought and in the place and function of religion in modern life.”⁸ But by 1930,⁹ this unexceptionable claim transmuted into a still more neutral statement that would leave almost entirely fluid the criteria for what would make it into the journal: “[*HTR*] aims to publish investigations, discussions, and reviews which contribute to the enlargement of knowledge or the advance of thought. From time to time it will present surveys of recent literature in the various fields of learning that fall within its cognizance.”¹⁰

⁵ Faculty of the Harvard Divinity School, “*Harvard Theological Review*” news release, 1907 (Bound with *HTR* 1 [1908]).

⁶ Front matter, *HTR* 1 (1908).

⁷ Front matter, *HTR* 1 (1908).

⁸ In *HTR* 4:1, after title page.

⁹ In *HTR* 23:2, after title page.

¹⁰ This last sentence disappears by the mid-1930s. Even in recent times, there have been subtle shifts in the statement of purpose. Thus, for example, in 1990 (83:1) we still read the standard claim, “The scope of the *Review* embraces theology, ethics, the history and philosophy of religion, and

Such pronouncements, stated early and then repeated unvaryingly for a century, do not tell us the whole of the story. Rather, unstated editorial preferences must, we assume, be taken as decisive. At the heart of the matter is the set of choices made regularly and in practice over a century, as mediated and enacted through the personality of the earliest editorial team, and then Arthur Darby Nock, Krister Stendahl, Helmut Koester, François Bovon, and their conversation partners.¹¹ *HTR* grew and flourished in accord with an understated undeclared editorial policy worked out, presumably, through in-house conversations.¹²

At this point, faced with rather minimal evidence of the study of world religions in *HTR* and still less evidence of any particular policy as to what was acceptable or not, it was not clear what else I might do to interpret the past of *HTR*, even just for the sake of my mandate to ponder its interreligious future. Without more clues as to the logic of the last hundred years of *HTR* with respect to religions, I have had to turn rather speculatively to the future, looking to how *HTR* might grow, and with what contemporary combination of independence, connectedness to community, and a possibly new sense of theological reflection.

But I do proceed with a thesis. I suggest that if *HTR* has remained focused on Biblical studies and Christian theology, and if this focus has arisen not from an explicitly stated editorial policy but out of the conversations of the HDS faculty, particularly the editors and their conversation partners, then shaping a more comprehensive yet still theological future for *HTR* will occur not by materially increasing the number of articles on various topics, or by drafting an explicitly inclusive mission statement, but rather by reimagining the community whence *HTR* properly arises: the Harvard Divinity School of 2008, inside Harvard University, an

cognate subjects. It aims to publish investigations, discussions, and reviews that contribute to the enlargement of knowledge or the advance of thought." In 1999 (92:4), however, the statement is instead, "The scope of the *Review* embraces theology, ethics, the history and philosophy of religion, biblical studies, and rabbinic studies. It seeks to publish compelling original research that contributes to the development of scholarly understanding and interpretation." It is hard to say, however, how much import we are to give to such changes.

¹¹ Only in Volume 56:2 (1963), with the appointment of Krister Stendahl as editor, did a formal division of editor, associate editors, and editorial assistants even begin to appear at the front of *HTR*. Whatever the reality on the ground, until then *HTR* was presented as the work of the editorial committee, even when Arthur Nock was clearly "first among equals," and we are told nothing of how the editorial team might have worked together.

¹² Even tributes to retiring editors give few clues: Krister Stendahl on Arthur Darby Nock: "At Harvard his 33-year editorship of the *Harvard Theological Review* made it a leading international journal" ("Arthur Darby Nock," *HTR* 57 [1964] 65–68, at 67). Helmut Koester on Stendahl: "This journal, *HTR*, owes Krister a special debt. After the death of its editor Arthur Darby Nock, who had guided its course for several decades, Krister Stendahl assumed the editorship. His declared goal was to continue and to defend the legacy of high quality scholarly publication which he had so much admired in this great history-of-religion scholar who had been his friend and mentor and for whose sixtieth birthday he had edited a special issue of the journal." Ibid. 79:1–3 (1986) viii. See also 24:3 (1931) for a tribute to George Foote Moore, and 26:1 (1933) for remarks honoring James Hardy Ropes. Despite the evident respect and gratitude, none of the statements gives much insight into what distinctive gifts and choices the various editors brought to their projects.

increasingly diverse and global university that provides a most interesting site for theological reflection. By reflecting on where the conversation about *HTR* occurs, we can gain insight into where its editorial practice might profitably lead.

■ Why It Matters that *Harvard Theological Review* Is Not a “Review”

But first, before teasing out the possibilities of “Harvard” and “Theological,” I wish to highlight the anomaly of calling *HTR* a “review.” According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a review is “a periodical publication consisting mainly of articles in which current events or questions, or literary works, are discussed or criticized.” It seems clear that *HTR* is not a review in this sense, given its rather early turn toward refined theological scholarship. But the fact that it had been conceived of as a review gives us an idea of its expected source of nourishment: the life of the Church embodied in a community of readers from the ministry and wider audience of readers interested in religion’s role in American life. *HTR* was, it seems, to have stood in a dynamic and symbiotic relationship with this academic and ecclesial readership, and this goal seems to have been indicated by the title of “review.”

In fact, though, *HTR* need not take up that function again, since *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* seems admirably suited for this purpose. Consider its stated policy: “Harvard Divinity Bulletin is a magazine that includes articles, reviews, and opinion pieces on religion and contemporary life, religion and the arts, religious history, and the study of religion.”¹³ A 2005 statement amplifies this “review-like” status: “Especially at a moment when conflict in public arenas so often involves religion, we believe it is important to open out the way we interpret, and reflect, HDS’s mission—which is preparing future scholars, ministers, and leaders across the professions according to a common intellectual rigor and with an emphasis on religious pluralism. We believe that this publication can be, in that regard, a broadly accessible—and broadly participated in—forum on questions of worldwide, ecumenical concern, with the School as its dynamic bedrock and monitor of excellence.” The actual practice of the *Bulletin* is faithful to this stated purpose, introducing accessible and timely topics in its various essays. It is written in such a way as to be accessible to a wide audience, not merely a scholarly one. The *Bulletin* is surely a “review” in a good and rich sense; but *HTR* is nothing like that.¹⁴

Why this matters is as follows: if *HTR* is not a review in the more immediate sense of interacting with a wider audience on current matters, we must ask where,

¹³ From the start, *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* took over the work of publishing most of the distinguished lectures supported by HDS.

¹⁴ Consider, for instance, the contents of the Spring/Summer 2007 issue: “Perspective Knowing and Unknowing,” Will Joyner; “God and Evolution: A New Solution,” Sarah Coakley; “Darwin Was Wrong,” Joan Roughgarden; “Thinking Like a Feminist,” Evelyn Fox Keller; “Stem Cell Dissent,” Eric Cohen; “Does Religion Cause Violence?” William T. Cavanaugh; “Embracing Earth While Facing Death,” Eshin Nishimura; “A Family Rift and a Cautionary Tale,” Ben Westhoff; “A Fateful Separation of Philosophy and Theology,” Louis Dupré; “Real Presences,” by Christine Helmer.

if anywhere, its center of gravity lies, and for whom, primarily, it is published, in today's vastly expanded global and interreligious theological environment. In order to craft a feasible prospect in this regard, we need to consider how *Harvard* might function as fertile ground for *HTR* as a *theological* journal.

■ “Harvard” as Defining *HTR*'s Location

In today's Harvard, the Church/churches can hardly be said to be a vital audience for the university, and it is debatable how deeply such communities matter to HDS itself, even if the School does maintain important relationships with particular churches. When *HTR* defined itself as “undenominational,” this was a pointed, bold claim directed to the churches, which understood the point of this claim to a kind of practical and intellectual independence. But there has always been the possibility of slippage, from undenominational to a simply detached status, merely unconnected to Church—as religious community—at all. We therefore need to consider how *HTR* might be a site for reflection on religion at Harvard, and Harvard itself the primary source for *HTR*'s place in the (re)thinking of religion today—Harvard conceived as a place rich in religious possibilities that necessarily connect the university to religious communities worldwide; the study of religions today does not allow us to think of a university merely as a site distanced from recognizable religions and conversation with them.

Certainly there are many possibilities. *HTR* itself is of course the primary publication of HDS, drawing in a privileged fashion upon the rich diversity of this academic community. HDS is in turn distinguished by specific enduring programs such as the Center for the Study of World Religions, the Women's Studies in Religion Program, and the Program in Religious Studies and Education. Any of these entities might be expected to produce substantive material for reflection such as might find a place in *HTR*. Likewise, HDS has a special relationship with the Committee on the Study of Religions; resources affiliated with the Committee, such as the Pluralism Project, also provide particular insights into issues of import and wide concern today. Given that religion is increasingly important in today's world, there are also many other venues at Harvard where religion is discussed, conversations to which *HTR* might well be attuned.

While Harvard is not a religiously affiliated institution, the university community is religiously diverse, and religion and religions are recognized as timely in different disciplines, in multiple ways. I suggest that reflection on religion at Harvard is and should be both objectively (with respect to the topic of reflection) and subjectively (with respect to those doing the reflecting) a multi- and then inter-religious environment. Given that *HTR* is not and should not try to be a “review,” I am not suggesting that *HTR* should start printing reports on events occurring at HDS and around the university. Rather, I am suggesting that it should be more vigorously the site for the publication of reflection on what has been written, discussed, lectured, taught, and performed at HDS and around the university.

“Harvard” also marks a conversation much larger than that which occurs on campus; the members of this community and the institutions that comprise it find in Harvard a way of connecting to the world, including the many religious communities where important conversations about religion—thought, felt, and lived—are occurring. Harvard in itself, and Harvard as the source of innumerable personal and institutional connections around the world, provides important personal connections for the sake of a community wherein religion can be explored by scholars of different religious backgrounds in conversation with scholars who simply write about religion and religions. Harvard is a place that makes such relationships easier to establish, and thus it is a context out of which *HTR* can redefine itself as a journal of this university. Even if the journal will never be a strictly in-house journal, where Harvard insiders do all the writing, it can build its base in and on Harvard, and craft its distinctive identity through conversations on campus, particularly among the editorial team.

■ How Might the *Harvard Theological Review* Still Be “Theological”?

There is a possibility, then, of *HTR* being a journal that is still usefully, profitably rooted in HDS, in Harvard, replete with reflection stemming from the internal and external networks of the university. But would the focus be “theology” in any recognizable sense? Here I appeal to two essays by colleagues at Harvard Divinity School.

As to what kind of theology this might be, let us recall first Ronald F. Thiemann’s 1986 Inaugural Convocation Address, “Toward a Critical Theological Education.”¹⁵ In reflecting on the current state of HDS at the time of the 350th anniversary of Harvard, Thiemann makes the case that only if HDS recovers and deepens a theological basis for its diverse curriculum can it become relevant again:

Our long tradition of critical historical studies and the diversity within our current faculty and student body should combine to make our conversations both rigorous and genuinely open. These issues must engage the attention of the entire faculty as we seek together to state what we mean by a critical theological education.¹⁶

For theology to be a relevant discipline in the contemporary university, it has to be a critical endeavor by which we can “raise new queries about the relation between the descriptive and the normative, between the critical and the moral dimensions of human understanding. In so doing we can contribute to the on-going discussion

¹⁵ Ronald F. Thiemann, “Toward a Critical Theological Education,” *HTR* 80 (1987) 1–13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12. He cautions his readers on why this matters: “If we cannot come to some broad consensus on these matters, then we will continue to face the necessity of political compromise every time we seek to make a faculty appointment. That is, of course, a recipe for mediocrity.”

about the moral applications of critical thinking, but we can also pose fresh questions about the fiduciary and moral presuppositions inherent in all critical inquiry.”¹⁷

On this basis too, Thiemann concludes, theological reflection will serve an “indispensable integrative function within our curriculum”:

The relation between the study of ancient Near Eastern cultures and the practice of preaching needs to be given *theological* articulation. The significance of the study of Buddhism or Islam for the practice of Christian ministry needs to be highlighted through *theological* reflection. The justification for public policy studies within a divinity school curriculum must be given in *theological* categories. As we seek to offer those theological reflections I am confident that we will discover a new and more inclusive notion of theology emerging, a notion of theology that will give new coherence to theological education and may even be of greater interest to those in the university and the wider society who overhear our conversation.¹⁸

While this critical reflection can occur imaginatively in many venues, I suggest that *HTR* can and should be a primary place wherein Harvard’s critical theological reflection is published. In this way, given the nature of the university, *HTR* will also become a truly interreligious theological journal.

We can update Thiemann’s forward-looking vision of theology by looking to Janet Gyatso’s 2003 convocation address (published in the *Bulletin*) and her plea for a more capacious sense of theology to be employed at HDS, such as would facilitate and recognize a place for the work of practicing Buddhist scholars engaged in constructive Buddhist theology:

In fact the American field of Buddhist Studies has been suffering from the lack anywhere in the United States of something like a divinity school, or even a theology department, to promote Buddhist theological thinking. With the exception of a couple of small Buddhist seminaries that are struggling because of their very invisibility, Buddhist studies has virtually always been taught in the United States in liberal-arts religious studies programs. And here the curious irony obtains that while there is frequently a desire on the part of departments to hire committed Buddhists to teach Buddhism, it is also widely felt that, in terms of teaching and writing, there is no room for confessional or normative Buddhist studies in the academy.

The alternative Buddhist theology would be a challenge and risky shift in mode of scholarship:

Something like Buddhist theology would represent a move to write about Buddhism from the inside, and this has a host of problems. Most crucially, the large majority of Buddhologists in the United States represent themselves as not Buddhist, and the few that are Buddhists are recent converts. To do Buddhist theology without a community from which one comes and for whom one speaks does not make much sense. . .

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Unexpectedly, Harvard might be a place for that community and the theology that might arise from it:

We also need a place from which to write—and perhaps this idea is closest to my own heart—in ways that will be exciting and inspiring not only to other Buddhologists but also to scholars of English literature, historians of medieval Christianity, historians of the subaltern collective in South Asia, scholars of American religion. A place where we can begin not only to talk about Buddhism not only as a set of unique, historically specific traditions, but also to recognize that we are often exploring issues about institutions, and writing practices, and disciplines, and ethics that are not uniquely Buddhist at all, and have as much to say to scholars of European religion as Foucault has to say to scholars of Buddhism.

This new conversation can of course be imagined similarly to include many other religious communities in their particular traditional and contemporary forms, as our thinking about religions is enriched in increasingly diverse and multi-directional conversations. That we might publish the fruits of such conversations in *HTR* is a truly exciting possibility.

Thiemann and Gyatso give us grounds for thinking otherwise about the future of theology at HDS and, by extension, about *HTR*'s future as a theological journal. If this kind of research and teaching is to become central at HDS, it can and should be published first of all in *HTR*. We could go on in this fashion, seeking other clues in the writing of HDS faculty, toward this kind of rooted and multi-religious theology, worked out with imagination regarding other religious traditions such as Hinduism and the religions of Africa and East Asia.¹⁹

This kind of intelligent theological approach should enable the term “theological” to have new force in a steadfastly ecumenical and interreligious framework, where terms such as “truth,” “revelation,” “scripture,” “grace,” “God,” “salvation,” and “liberation” have enduring force, even in the modern university.

As in the traditions themselves, all of this has to be worked out through texts, traditions, practices, and reason—and in a theology that is undenominational, global, inclusive, and in conversation across religious boundaries. How this might be a practicable theological conversation that could find its place in a scholarly journal such as *HTR* is a difficult question, since a vast set of global possibilities does not necessarily or easily condense itself into a regularly published journal. Given diversity of traditions and languages, different theological terminologies, even different styles of usage of the English language, it will certainly not be easy to produce and maintain a high quality theological journal that is seriously global and interreligious.

¹⁹ See for instance, Anne Monius's “Siva as Heroic Father: Theology and Hagiography in Medieval South India,” *HTR* 97 (2004) 165–97, an essay rich in potential theological implications drawn from the south Indian context. See also my own 2005 essay, “Passionate Comparison: The Intensification of Affect in Interreligious Reading—a Hindu-Christian Example,” *HTR* 98 (2005) 367–90.

But there is no reason for us to lose a sense of proportion at this point, and we should realistically assume that *HTR*'s editorial community will continue to work at making this a viable journal in continuity with its first one hundred years. For instance, if *HTR* has for generations made a signal contribution to "Biblical Studies," there is no reason why a more broadly conceived commitment to the interpretation of "Scriptures" might not be a signal characteristic of the future *HTR*. Such a commitment, because focused, might enhance *HTR*'s global profile, clarifying the kinds of contributions most appropriate to this particular journal. It would follow, of course, that a theological journal in which this wider study of scripture is prominent would also shed light on how the Bible is most relevantly studied today, in conversation with the wider community of text scholars of many traditions.

As Harvard's global journal for critical (inter)religious (theological) reflection, *HTR* would then still be for "the Church"—this term now indicating a wider variety of communities of religious believers, practitioners, and others who are sympathetically interested in faith and practice. Just as "non-denominational" and "undenominational" did not indicate a secular disinterest in or absolute separation from religious communities, *HTR*'s academic stance in the next century might be similarly free from any too particular bond to any one tradition, while yet being constructive and actively interested in the critical religious reflection occurring in many traditions.

Seen in this light, the future of theology at Harvard is not necessary dim. As Francis Greenwood Peabody wrote in a more hopeful tone at the end of his essay:

As one reviews the signs of the times which call to theology, he observes that it is a call which in many countries and many forms is being heard and obeyed. . . . The signs of a new concern for the rational interpretation of religion are so many that they appear to be premonitions of a genuine renaissance. . . . The period of indifference seems approaching its close, and an era of promise for theology seems to be at hand.

This of course need not be true also in 2008; we cannot merely assume that doing our work well and imaginatively will result in a wider, renewed interest in theology. But it does seem plausible that one of the more solidly founded hopes for theology's future lies in the prospect that it may be (more) deeply rooted in the context of Harvard, for broader yet scholarly conversations that are Harvard's, and still theological, and appearing as the dominant theme of *HTR* in the first years of its second century.

Borderlands

In its centenary year, the *Harvard Theological Review* stands at a threshold that reflects Harvard Divinity School's renewed determination to do justice to the cultural and ethnic diversity of our contemporary world, to foster interdisciplinarity, and to enter into dialogue with the social and natural sciences. David Carrasco's Convocation Address at the Harvard Divinity School in September 2006 boldly outlined some of the implications of this resolve, and suggested that we adopt the notion of borderlands not only to refer to the expanding U.S.-Mexican borderlands where diverse cultures, languages, politics and religious practices converge, collide and undergo transformation, but as a lens through which to interpret and understand the dramatically changing religious, social, and cultural landscapes in which we are all living today. It is this existential sense of the term borderlands that Carrasco, Jackson and Premawardhana address in their explorations of the new forms of intellectual identity, academic writing, teaching practice, and religious creativity that arise in the destabilized and transgressive lifeworlds we now inhabit.

Borderlands and the “biblical hurricane”: Images and Stories of Latin American Rhythms of Life

Davíd Carrasco

Harvard Divinity School

Macondo was already a fearful whirlwind of dust and rubble being spun about by the wrath of the biblical hurricane when Aureliano skipped eleven pages so as not to lose time with facts he knew only too well, and he began to decipher the instant that he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying himself in the act of deciphering.¹

This essay grows out of the Convocation Address at the Harvard Divinity School in September 2006 in which I argued that we live in a world of geopolitical, cultural, and religious borderlands. By using the word “borderlands” instead of “globalization” or “world” or “borderline,” I am referring not only to the dramatic and expanding U.S.-Mexican borderlands where diverse cultures, languages, and religious practices (and for the present, political campaigns) meet, “bump,”² contend, and transform each other, but also to the borderlands as a perspective and lens through which to interpret and understand the dramatically changing religious, social, and cultural landscapes in which we are all living today. Borderlands means for me the geographical, political, and cultural landscapes straddling countries but also the existential conditions of people who often, if not continually, find themselves at the crossroads of their lives and seek new combinations of resources—cultural and religious—to carry on creative struggles for survival and to thrive. When I read of history’s configurations and ruptures, the center-oriented places and eccentric innovations, the rulers and the rebels, it is then that the places and powers

¹ Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (trans. Gregory Robassa; New York: Harper Perennial, 2004) 416.

² For a cogent discussion of cultural “bumping” in the Mexico-U.S. borderlands see Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez, *Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States* (Tucson, Ariz.: University of Arizona Press, 1996).

of the borderlands and the people who live in-between continually confront me, stretching out to me again and again. The position I shall take in this essay reflects, in part, my participation in a public debate at the Divinity School (the year before) with Samuel P. Huntington about his recent work, *Who are We: The Challenges to America's National Identity*, a book that includes a demeaning description and interpretation of Mexican and Mexican-American peoples.³ Huntington argues that American Identity—by which he means U.S. culture and politics—is founded on a “core culture” of Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking values and practices. Huntington’s view of social and religious history in the United States, I argued, ignores the significant dynamics of the many cultural crossroads and religious borderlands that have always done more to generate American identity as lived experiences than his provincial “cultural cores.” In my Convocation Address I also urged our school to further deprovincialize itself by attending to the colonial history and religious creativity of Latin American religions in order to grasp more fully the borderland realities that are becoming apparent in the United States as a result of immigration from these other Americas. By doing this we shall be able to move our discourse on race to a discourse on race mixture, and our discussions of hybridity to an engagement with the more realistic asymmetrical hybridities.

There will be some very helpful surprises as we attend to Latin American and Latino/a borders and borderlands. For instance—as Michael Jackson writes elsewhere in this issue about interpretive developments in anthropology—the new awareness of globalization led to the realization that the postmodern condition is defined by notions of “diffusion, diaspora and hybridization.”⁴ But as Jackson’s work shows in a parallel way through his studies in Australia and Sierra Leone, when we study the history of religions in Latin America, and even in parts of North America, we discover that hybridization and diaspora have always been crucial parts of the daily life, content, making of culture, and the religious imagination from the earliest Euro-African-Indigenous contacts until today. In this way, the peregrinations, invasions, rebellions, and exchanges in borderland places such as New Orleans and Boston, Cuba and Martinique, Rio and Esmeraldas (Ecuador), Mexico City and San Francisco, North Carolina and South Dakota have always constituted, defined, and transformed the Americas.

A host of publications reflect the critical values and development of borderlands thinking, of which I mention only a few here, including *Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwest United States* by Carlos Vélaz e Ibáñez, *The Future is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet* by Virgilio Elizondo, *Rethinking the Borderlands: Between Chicano Culture and Legal Discourse* by Carlos Gutierrez Jones, and the brilliant memoir *Places Left Unfinished at the Time of Creation* by John Phillip Santos. Perhaps the most powerful expression of borderlands thinking appears in

³ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who are We: The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004).

⁴ Michael D. Jackson, “Beyond Biography and Ethnography,” *HTR* 101 (2008) 377–97.

Gloria Anzaldúa's bilingual *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Walter Mignolo credits Gloria Anzaldúa with achieving an interpretive breakthrough in this work, a new and different way of thinking about the complex cultural histories of the Americas. He writes:

Anzaldúa's great theoretical contribution is to create a space-in-between *from where* to think rather than a hybrid space *to talk about*, a hybrid thinking-space of Spanish/Latin American and Amerindian legacies as the condition of possibility for Spanish/Latin American and Amerindian postcolonial theories.⁵

In this essay I shall explore the hybrid-thinking spaces, contact zones, and cultural creativity of specific Latin American and Latino/a religious expressions as reflected in the terms of my title "borderlands," "biblical," and "hurricane." In doing so I shall emphasize not only the life worlds of these expressions but also the rhythms of life (i.e., the dynamic interchanges and expressions that constituted and renewed the religious imaginations and life-worlds of the borderland Americans). Ethnographically when referring to "biblical borderlands," I shall focus on the religious expressions of Jaguar Christians, the Catholic saint, Santiago, the Cristos de Caña as transculturated by Indians in Mexico, as well as the borderlands' ceremonial landscape of the Virgin of Guadalupe. We shall see that in one case Indians themselves choose to be Christians and to Christianize their Sun God, in another case they transformed the saint's horse into an indigenous animal, while in the corn stalk Jesus, the Indian artists camouflage their complex remaking of the biblical figure. In the example of La Virgen de Guadalupe, I shall show how the official texts of the apparitions map out a dynamic ceremonial landscape, a ritual borderland that consists of competing ceremonial centers—one representing the colonizer, and the other representing the pre-Columbian world of the now colonized. When I refer to "hurricane," I shall discuss some constructions of race mixture in various parts of Latin America where the Iberian, Aboriginal, and African peoples met, became involved sexually, and produced offspring of different hues and political meanings. I shall add a comment about the creative art of the writer, Gloria Anzaldúa, and the musician, Jose Cuellar, [Dr. Loco, pseud.], to illustrate how two Chicano artists work from in-between spaces to think, write, and make music.

⁵ Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1995) xiii.

■ Borderlands as Expanding Cultural Territories

I'm not an immigrant. My family has lived in the San Antonio Valley before this country was a country. So it is for many Latinos. We didn't come to you. You came to us.⁶

When I was a child we considered the borderland to be that space from Chihuahua to Las Cruces, from Los Angeles to Corpus Christi, an area which Carlos Veléz e Ibáñez writes is filled with an unequal "distribution of sadness,"⁷ by which he means the overrepresentation of Mexicans in poverty, crime, illness, and war. In his book, Vélez e Ibáñez also shows how Mexicans in the borderlands have produced significant literary and artistic works which reflect and deal with this sadness. Like a number of scholars, he sees these border visions as developing, not on one side of a borderline but constantly crossing and crisscrossing both sides of the border and thereby mapping out a "Greater Mexican Southwest." He writes "There are different labels for this area—the Spanish Borderlands, the Greater Southwest, the Greater Mexican Northwest and even Northern Mesoamerica. Whatever label is used, for me the area encompasses the southwestern United States and northern Mexico."⁸ Another Mexican-American scholar, the historian Albert Camarillo, has mapped out the historical context for Mexican immigration into this bulging borderlands and has discovered a very significant temporal depth to the cultural history of the Greater Mexican Southwest. He writes,

For nearly four hundred years since the establishment of Spanish colonial settlement in New Mexico in the early seventeenth century, mestizo people from Mexico have traveled north into the region that today borders the United States and Mexico. Hardy frontier people—soldiers, missionaries, and civilians, men and women—settled the sparsely populated far northern borderlands, first for the Spanish crown and later for the Republic of Mexico (1821–1848). After the U.S.-Mexican War in 1848, the once northern provinces were annexed by the United States and a new international boundary line separated the two nations. About a hundred thousand former Mexican citizens opted to remain in their native lands, as they became Americans by virtue of the treaty that settled the war. For nearly seventy years after the war, Mexicans could freely cross the Rio Grande river into Texas or travel without interference across the largely imaginary lien in the desert between Mexico and the United States elsewhere in the region.⁹

⁶ Virgilio Elizondo, *The Future is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet* (Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2000) xxii

⁷ Carlos Veléz-Ibáñez, *Border Visions: Mexican Cultures of the Southwest* (Tucson, Ariz.: University of Arizona Press, 1996) 3.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Albert Camarillo, "Alambrista and the Historical Context of Mexican Immigration to the United States in the Twentieth Century," in *Alambrista and the US-Mexico Border: Film, Music and Stories of Undocumented Immigrants* (ed. Nicholas Cull and David Carrasco; Albuquerque, N. Mex.: University of New Mexico Press, 2004) 14.

Camarillo outlines four significant periods of the movement of Mexican peoples into the United States including 1) the first Great Migration from 1910–1920, 2) the Bracero Era of 1942–1964, 3) the “Los Mojados” period of the 1950s, and 4) the Second Great Migration from the 1970’s to the present.¹⁰ The primary motive for these immigrants has been the search for opportunity and economic stability through labor in agricultural fields, railroads, factories, and industries. The results were profound in economic and cultural terms and resulted in complex exchanges between laboring peoples and employers, migrant workers and owners, English speakers and Spanish speakers, plus the sharing and mixing of musical traditions, cuisines, languages, and families. For many peoples and cultural practices, the borderlands are a space of “back and forthness” where families and their cultural practices move back and forth, constantly rejuvenating and challenging the traditions and evolving communities they leave and join. It is important to emphasize that economic institutions on the U.S. side of the border—including the U.S. government—actively recruited Mexican and Latin American workers and benefited significantly from their presence. Camarillo speaks to the power of this labor history when he writes,

Immigration from Mexico to the United States in the twentieth century is not only the most prolonged movement of people in American immigration history, it is also the largest sustained international labor migration in the world. Since 1942, when the Bracero Program was initiated, over 6.3 million Mexicans have crossed the border in to the United States, with the greatest numbers of immigrants arriving during the 1980’s and 1990’s.¹¹

What is so conveniently and tragically forgotten is that the U.S. border has migrated into other political and cultural territories on many occasions, thereby expanding the U.S.-Mexican borderlands over vast territories. The U.S. border moved south in 1848 after the Mexican-American War to include California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and parts of Colorado and Utah. The U.S. border expanded again in 1898 to engulf Puerto Rico in an annexation that is still in hot dispute. Now the borderlands are shifting again as Spanish, Portuguese, and Creole languages, food, literature, art, family patterns, religious faiths and imaginations, sexual fire, musical heat, myths, athletes, and ideas migrate north and spread out in all directions. One advertiser calls Latinos “Mega Bueno.” As I have shown elsewhere, the real borderlands today are cities: Los Angeles, the great linguistic, social, and racial borderlands linking the Pacific “rim” to the United States and Mexico; New York about which some said recently, “the good thing about New York City is that it is so close to the United States.” In his book, *La Memoria Rota (The Broken Memory)* Puerto Rican cultural critic Arcadio Díaz Quiñones shows us that parts of New York have been a Caribbean city for over one hundred years. A city blessed with such Caribeños as José Martí, Celia Cruz, Eugenio María de Hostos,

¹⁰ Ibid, 14.

¹¹ Ibid., 27.

Machito, and Tito Puente. We now hear the bomba, plena, and salsa sounds in immigrant neighborhoods from Lorrain, Ohio to Hartford, Connecticut, from Perth Amboy to Hawaii. Other cities that have become political and cultural borderlands with strong Latino/a presences are Miami, City on the Edge; Denver, City in the Air; Boston, City that is Green Once a Year; San Juan, City in the Painful Sea; El Paso/Juarez, City of the Violated Outrage; San Francisco, City of Culture Clash and Barrio Mission. Today it is said that the Latin American-U.S. Borderlands stretch from Chile to Wisconsin and Seattle, Washington. It is also important to remember as John Coatsworth—the economic historian of Mexico—has discovered, that forty-two times in the twentieth century, that is once every eighteen months, the U.S. government was involved, directly and indirectly, covertly and overtly, in regime changes in many Latin American countries. Border crossings have been made in all directions and one of the reasons so many Latin Americans are migrating here is because the United States has been “there” so many times and with such force.

■ Writings From Within the Borderlands

As Michael Jackson says about borderland writing, “we need novel forms of academic writing and interdisciplinary thought *that place non-European and European epistemologies and theologies on the same footing.*”¹² In my view Latin America has produced novel forms of interdisciplinary thought that illuminate the dramatic interactions between non-European and European lives—both epistemologies and theologies—and in some cases, represent what can be called a “borderland epistemology” that shows how peoples who underwent colonial domination created new forms of knowledge that contained elements, to varying degrees, of African, European, and indigenous world views and rhythms of life.

Consider the long list of Nobel Prizes in Literature given to Latin American writers in the second half of the twentieth century. Gabriela Mistral from Chile won the prize in 1947 in part for her *Cartas de Amor y Desamore* and for exploring how Latin American identity is formed from a mixture of Indian and European influences. In 1966 Miguel Angel Asturias from Guatemala won the prize in part for his *Hombres de Maiz* which illuminated the magical world of indigenous religion. Called the greatest poet of the twentieth century in any language, Pablo Neruda from Chile won the prize in 1971 in recognition of his epic *Canto General*. Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* hit the literary world of Latin America and then the world like an earthquake in 1982. Writing about Garcia Marquez in the *New York Times*, William Kennedy remarked, “*One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the first piece of literature since the book of Genesis that should be required reading for the entire human race. It takes up not long after Genesis left off and carries us through the air age.”

¹² Jackson, “Between Biography and Ethnography,” *HTR* 101 (2008) 380.

I can think of other writers that we should also be required to read, but divinity school students would do well to pay more attention to the religious dimensions of this and other Latin American writings. The Mexican poet and essayist Octavio Paz won the Nobel Prize in 1990 in part for his *The Labyrinth of Solitude* in which the national character of Mexico is cast in a rich narrative about the interactions of Aztec, Catholic, European, and African peoples. The African-Latin American borderlands is highlighted by the Derek Wolcott 1992 prize, in part for his epic *Omeros*. Throughout his work, Wolcott has explored how his identity is rooted in a fusion of African, Asian, and European stories, struggles, and meanings. We can also mention the borderland writings of Carlos Fuentes, Isabelle Allende of Chile, Jorge Luis Borges of Argentina, Jose Marti of Cuba and Nelida Piñon of Brazil.

I mention these names and prizes to make two points. First, I want to emphasize the deep narratives of engagement with the cultural and racial borderlands in Latin American identities. These novels and poems also show us the diversity within the Latin American borderlands where European and indigenous and African languages and religious practices engage with one another, resulting in rich combinations and mixtures. Part of what we learn is that culture and religions are very different in Chile from what they are in Guatemala, remarkably diverse in Colombia in ways that seem worlds away from the mixtures found in Mexico and Brazil.

My second point in invoking these Nobel Prize Winners from Latin America is that the crux of their achievements was the creation of new narrative languages written from within the various cultural borderlands, entangled histories, and border crossings between the epistemologies and theologies of Europe, Africa, Latin America, and in some cases, Asia. These writers somehow dwell, imagine, and write from that space in-between rather than about hybrid experiences and expressions. What Octavio Paz says in his Nobel prize lecture about transplanted European languages can be said about transplanted European, African, and even Asian religions in Latin America. He tells us that

The European languages . . . planted in an unknown and unnamed world: they took root in the new lands and, as they grew within the societies of America, they were transformed. They are the same plant yet also a different plant. Our literatures did not passively accept the changing fortunes of the transplanted languages: they participated in the process and even accelerated it. They very soon ceased to be mere transatlantic reflections: at times they have been the negation of the literatures of Europe; more often, they have been a reply.¹³

As recent scholarship has shown, the religious practices in Latin American Candomble, Santeria, Guadalupe worship, liberation theology, and Pentecostalism are shaped in part by the trans-Atlantic exchanges between Europe, Africa, and indigenous America—sometimes a protest, more often a reply—filled with innovation and transculturation.

¹³ Octavio Paz, “In Search of the Present” Nobel Lecture delivered 8 December 1990 (can be viewed at: http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1990/paz-lecture-e.html) 1.

■ Borderlands as Critical Orientation in the Contact Zones

Gloria Anzaldúa is not the first writer to teach me hybrid thinking spaces in the study of religion and culture and to apply them to the complexities and mysteries of Latin America. This distinction goes to Charles H. Long who, in his now classic *Significations*, insisted that “a method must be found whereby we deal with the religious history of all the American peoples.”¹⁴ Anticipating borderlands epistemology he continues,

I suggest that we might begin by defining this culture as an Aboriginal-Euro-African culture. The terms should not be seen as simply additive or descriptive. The terms are relational. This means that these meanings should always form the background for any discussion of American religion at any historical period.¹⁵

In Latin America we can define it as Aboriginal-Iberian-African culture(s), a prodigious series of contact zones wherein hybrid worlds of living, forming families, worshiping, and arguing were cultivated. Taking the matter deeper, Long writes elsewhere about the profound interpretive borderlands that developed during the decades we associate with the development of the modern sciences. Focusing on the study of religion and anthropology, he affirms that, like all modes of study, they are children of the Enlightenment and therein critical orientations were sought and achieved new and different modes of understanding. Then, exposing what has often been hidden in the histories of our disciplines, Long writes,

The other critical element in the discussion of religion in the modern world is related to the Western exploration of the world that is symbolized by the voyages of Christopher Columbus in the late fifteenth century. From that time until the twentieth century, the Western world, through conquest, trade and colonialism, made contact with every part of the globe. These encounters and confrontations with other cultures raised again the issue of religion. Did all peoples possess religion or were there cultures that were devoid of the religious sentiment? If religion was a form of human meaning that might be dispensed with, what status should one allow the religions of these other cultures? Is there a continuity of some sort between the religions of other cultures and the religions that are part of the Western meaning of religion?¹⁶

But the combination of Enlightenment methods and epistemologies with the violent opening of a New World led not so much to better understanding of others as to intellectual strategies which “paved the ground for historical evolutionary thinking, racial theories and forms of color symbolism that made the economic and military conquest of various cultures and peoples justifiable and defensible.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Charles H. Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (Aurora, Colo.: Davies Group, 1999) 155.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

Long's work anticipates not only Anzaldúa's hybrid-thinking space but also the highly useful notions of "contact zone" and "transculturation" elaborated by Mary Louise Pratt. The borderlands of Enlightenment epistemologies and European invasions of the Americas led to massive exchanges between members of these tripartite and new cultures. Pratt describes the contact zone as a place of tense interface of cultures. The "Contact Zone" is

the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict . . . often within radically asymmetrical relations of power. By using the term contact, I aim to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination.¹⁸

The improvisation of narratives takes place as an expression of "transculturation" when dominated peoples select and invent from materials transmitted to them from both the dominant culture and their own indigenous traditions. They work with what they absorb and what they sustain. What Pratt does not speak about adequately are the ways that all participants in the contact zones—including the privileged, the Europeans, the arrival of the White People—transculturates (i.e., pick and choose, mix, and reinvent elements of their own and the others' cultures). As the devotion to La Virgen de Guadalupe shows, it is not just the indigenous peoples, the mestizos, or the mulattos who are picking and choosing from competing cultural traditions, it is also the priests, the bishops, the viceroys, and the local rulers. I am impressed with the theme of creative work, of translation, and of transculturation that takes place in the contact zone.

The spatial sense of the analogy contact zone reminds me of other terms that have appeared in postcolonial scholarship that refer to our interpretive position as a "critical landscape" or an "undone interval" or the more down home "street buzz" or as Stuart Hall says "thinking at the limit."¹⁹

I insist that we follow these spatial tropes in our explorations of the borderlands and its biblical dimensions to understand better the inter-subjectivities that take shape in religious images such as Mayan Christianity, the cult of Santiago, and the Virgin of Guadalupe.

■ Hybridity and Jaguar Christians at the Beginning of the "Americas"

One example of creative struggles and hybridity during the *encuentro* (meeting) between newly arrived Europeans and Indigenous peoples is recounted in Munroe

¹⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 7

¹⁹ *Questions of Cultural Identity* (ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1996) 3.

Edmonson's translation and commentary on the colonial Mayan manuscript—*The Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimin*—a document that recounts Mayan history from the seventh through the nineteenth centuries. It is a book about social and religious transformations, including passages that tell us that the native priests took the initiative to Christianize their Sun God. It is significant that the invading Spaniards appear in the text “as an annoying but shadowy and largely irrelevant presence, alluded to by nicknames”²⁰ and not as the thundering conquistadores that the Spaniards paint themselves to have been. Mayan history tells us that a borderlands reality, not a conquest reality, was underway almost immediately upon contact between Europeans and Mayans. In this fragment from the *Tizimin* manuscript we find an excellent example of a critical, hybrid narrative about their new world and how they become what I have called “Jaguar Christians,” or Christians in terms of the Mayan worldview.

The passage begins by identifying the city of Merida (a colonial city built on top of a Mayan site) as the “seat” or central place of a twenty-year period and then describes a decision the Mayans made—the decision to ask the Spaniards to baptize them into the Christian religion. Following the report of the civil war between enemy Mayan communities and a famine that struck the land, the “Spokesman of the Jaguar” narrated the “scattering” of songs among the Maya saying:

Your younger brothers are coming!

Your older brothers are arriving

To change your pants,

To change your clothes,

To whiten your dress

To whiten your pants—

The foreign judges,

The bearded men

Of Heaven Born Merida,

The seat of the lands.

And they

Are the Sun priests

Of the living God

The True God.

He shall be worshipped

In one communion

On earth

Below:

An additional

Rule

And for the fatherless,

And for the motherless-

Jaguar was the head

²⁰ Munroe Edmonson, ed. *The Ancient Future of the Itza: The Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimin*. (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas, 1992) xx.

And urged his people
 To be sprinkled in the changed city.
 So came about
 Its founding,
 And it was the founding of the three-part rule
 In Heaven Born Merida²¹

First, we are told that singers spread the word throughout Mayan communities that some people had arrived—the bearded Spaniards who are referred to not as strangers, but in terms of respect and kinship (younger and older brothers). “They came to change you,” the Spokesman of the Jaguar announced, “to change your clothes and the color of your clothes.” These new arrivals have more power than the Maya and they reside in the seat of power in “Heaven Born Merida.” This city has a celestial prestige, it is born in heaven! At this point we can suspect an improvisation, a “translation” of indigenous ideas into the narrative for in some pre-Hispanic documents—pyramids, temples, and other ceremonial buildings descend from heaven to earth and establish the prestige of being the axis mundi in the community! The presence of the native voice and improvisation continues in the next passage about the “Sun priests of the living God, the True God.” In pre-Hispanic times the Sun Priests were Mayan leaders in charge of religious organizations, solar gods, calendar cycles, agriculture, and its most precious fruit, corn. Here, the indigenous term is redirected to the Catholic priests. The phrase *Hahal Ku* (True God) in Mayan is their term for the Christian God but since we have seen one type of theological dexterity (i.e., the Christian Priest becomes a Sun Priest), why not suspect another—gods of the contact zone. This is likely when we realize that the *Hahal Ku*, (True God, that is, the Christian God), and the *Hunah Ku* (sole Creator God, or the the Mayan God) were merged into one God around this period. The reference to the Catholic Mass, “He shall be worshipped in one communion on Earth Below,” presents us with the question of who was being worshipped and how was it done? The final message in the fragment about “The Additional Rule” refers to the internal violence and the impact of Spanish coercion on the natives for the latter have been left fatherless and motherless (i.e., those who lost their families, their lineage, and perhaps even some access to their ancestors). Then we meet the Jaguar, the highest native official in Mayan communities who controlled public offices, land titles, and tribute rights in local communities. “The Jaguar was the head” who tells his people, now living in the borderlands of “New Spain” to be “sprinkled” (i.e., baptized in the changed city) and it is this action and place that marks the “founding” of a new world.

biblical

I use the term “biblical” in lower case to indicate my interest in how Indigenous American and African peoples as well as mestizos, mulattos, and Europeans in the

²¹ Ibid., 44–45

New World received, utilized, and transformed Biblical teachings and Christian stories, saints, and imports. I am just as interested in knowing what local peoples in the Americas made of Biblical stories (and the new meanings made out of them) as I am interested in knowing what was taught in the changed cities. This creative reworking is seen clearly in the reinterpretation by native peoples in Mexico of the Catholic saint, Santiago. Santiago stood most clearly for the violence done to native Americans by Spaniards in the conquest period. Santiago arrived from Spain as the symbol of the Reconquista, a 750-year expansion of Christian kingdoms successfully recovering the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslim states of Al-Andalus. Santiago was often depicted on his white horse crushing cowering Muslims holding their typical swords—a sign of Christianity on the move, the holy war against Islam in Iberia. In the accounts of the conquest of Mexico, Santiago appears in visions and as an inspiration to insure Spanish victory over the heathen, idol-worshipping Mayans and Aztecs. As one scholar writes about the saint's grand triumphalist meaning, "he was claimed by the Franciscans as patron for their evangelical province of Xalisco and by the Dominicans for their province of Mexico. To Spaniards, he came to symbolize their destiny to rule and the Indians' destiny to submit."²² This Christian triumphalism is reflected in the names of towns in Mexico and the United States as *Matamoras*, "kill the Moors." But in the borderland conditions of colonial Mexico, Santiago's powers were understood to be available to Indians as well. In fact, the indigenous people who fell under his wrath believed him to be associated with their own gods of lightning and thunder and they thought that if an Indian converted to Christianity, Santiago's powers would be extended to him or her. This ambiguity is reflected in his being chosen, often with the support of local Indians, as the patron saint of over eighty-one colonial settlements. Additionally, many prominent Indian men were baptized Santiago and took his name as their own surname. More importantly, the native peoples saw Santiago from within their particular understanding of the cosmos and its sacred animals. Their reworking of Santiago into their own creation shows how religious interpretations in the borderland/contact zone sometimes works. Taylor writes,

Santiago's attraction to Indian neophytes consisted partly in his horse. Judging by the monumental representations of fanged serpents and their intimate association between eagles or jaguars and the most esteemed warriors, the pre-colonial societies of central Mexico prized the large, fierce animals around them as important agents of divine power and authority. According to Inga Clendinnen, Mexican warriors regarded the Spaniards' horses not as obedient brutes or emblems of the owners' social standing, but as courageous and powerful animal warriors that may have acted in unison with their riders but were independent of them.²³

²² William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 272.

²³ *Ibid.*, 274.

Scholarship on Santiago in Mexico illustrates that the longer the Indians had access to Santiago images and powers, the less he remained a symbol of the Conquest and the more he was “harnessed to local purposes—to heal, protect and fertilize.”²⁴ In one case an Indian healer named María insisted that she had had intercourse with an invisible Spaniard who, like Santiago, came to her on a white horse, an act that resulted in the enhancement of her healing powers that were used primarily for indigenous peoples. In other parts of Mexico, Santiago assisted with the weather because of his powers of thunder and lightning, was celebrated in the dance of the *cristianos* (Christians) and *moros* (Moors)—primarily by native peoples—and sometimes disappeared from the dramatic scene as when his horse, upon receiving offerings of corn, assisted Indian women in getting pregnant. As Taylor sums it up, “His various meanings were rooted not only in the official Spanish messages about conquest and conversion, but also in native understandings of animals and the sacred, and in adjustments to colonial rule at the local level.”²⁵

■ Cristos de Caña as Places of Transculturation

The examples of Jaguar Christians and Santiago have traditionally and conveniently been handled under the ubiquitous and lazy category of syncretism—a term which the recent *Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion* evaluates as “a term of dubious heritage and limited usefulness often employed to ascribe insincerity, confusion, or other negative qualities to a nascent religious group.”²⁶ Inga Clendinnen in her helpful essay “Ways to the Sacred: Reconstructing ‘Religion’ in Sixteenth-Century Mexico” goes even further when she writes, “syncretism is not even a teachable proposition because we are not faced with a creative mixing of divergent traditions but with the inexactability of a profoundly different way of conceptualizing the world and man’s place within it.”²⁷ One example of borderland thinking that goes beyond syncretism is found in the Cristos de Caña, the hollow, paper mache-like images of Christ on the Cross, made of plants and produced in Mexico by Indians during the colonial period. They show that the *forms* of colonial Indians’ Christianity were more orthodox than the content!—outwardly looking as though a real conquest of native ways to the sacred had been, if not hammered, reworked artistically to appear more European than those made by Europeans. The Cristo de Caña that was displayed in the 1992 exhibit “Mexico, Splendor of Thirty Centuries” illustrated the combination of artistry and violence in the life-size figure of the crucified Jesus. These Christs were made from “corn stalks and corn pitch, orchid-bulb glue, carpenter’s paste, and a fine clay stucco surface wrapped around a wooden

²⁴ Ibid., 274.

²⁵ Ibid., 277.

²⁶ Jonathan Z. Smith, *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995) 1042.

²⁷ Inga Clendinnen, “Ways to the Sacred: Reconstructing ‘Religion’ in Sixteenth-Century Mexico” *History and Anthropology* 5 (1990) 109.

frame—made by Indians indicating that there Christianity appears outwardly well formed to a European eye.”²⁸ But a closer look at an accidental discovery of what was inside reveals that these were objects of the contact zone! William Taylor in his masterful study writes,

These light crucifixes from the early colonial period, whose materials connected Christ’s passage through birth, death and resurrection to the regeneration of the sacred food plant, maize, sometimes contained writing that would have added to the figures’ sacred energy, at least for the maker.²⁹

In the case of a Cristo de Caña from Mexicaltzingo, an Indian pueblo in the Valley of Mexico south of the city, there is evidence that more improvisation than conquest was at work. It was Antonio Carrillo y Gariel who, while studying Cristos de Caña, discovered what was inside when one fell from a wall and broke open. When an examination was made, they found that the chest cavity, abdomen, and upper arms of Jesus were formed around three types of documents that had come to have powerful meanings for the native artists. These documents included pages of sixteenth-century community tax records in native style, substantial fragments of Nahuatl texts on Spanish paper, and in Roman script, documents about the life of Christ, and most surprisingly of all, a stencil (perhaps an embroidery pattern) of Raphael’s painting, “il Pasma de Sicilia,” depicting Christ’s fall on the road to Calvary. These native artists—who became Christians who worked with the local priests—had secretly combined texts and meanings from both indigenous and European cultures in their creation of an outwardly Christian but inwardly borderlands Jesus. One could argue that this was what one scholar called an “idols behind altars”³⁰ pattern, but it is more likely that we are witnessing a secret history of religious transculturation. This history says that the image of Christ was associated with 1) the community’s forced payments to authorities but recorded in the native style as found in other indigenous tribute documents, 2) the life of Jesus as told, not in the conqueror’s language, but in the lingua franca of the Aztec empire, and 3) the suffering of Indians (falling on the road to Calvary). What might be overlooked is that this image of a multicultural, sympathetic Jesus is made of the most sacred food plant in all of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica (i.e., corn). Corn was not only food but one of the key materials that provided a way to the sacred in indigenous eyes. This ritual improvisation is a good example of how indigenous peoples, seeking the spiritual knowledge of Spaniards while keeping their own religious habits alive, took control of what the outsiders brought in and made use of it in their own terms. This Cristo de Caña is a “camouflaged vision of place” that allows a people under ideological siege to put a false vision of conquest in focus while disguising their own interpretation of a ritual image.

²⁸ Taylor, *Magistrates*, 61

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 61

³⁰ Anita Brenner, *Idols behind Altars* (New York: Harcourt, 1929).

■ Guadalupe's Ceremonial Landscape as a Borderland

A common phrase is that “Mexico was born at Tepeyac” which refers to the four apparitions of the Virgen de Guadalupe at the sacred hill of Tepeyac (at that time located far outside of Mexico City) that today serves as the site of the Catholic Patronness of all the Americas. Theological interpretations of these apparitions emphasize the religious experiences of two individuals (the two Juans) who came into contact with La Virgen de Guadalupe—the lowly Indian Juan Diego, and the elevated Spaniard Juan de Zummaraga. However, my reading of the Guadalupe texts as a hybrid-thinking, ritual space shows the mapping out of a ceremonial landscape that emphasizes social and religious boundary crossings that link two opposing “centers” into a ritual borderland that has become the quintessential ritual space of Mexico. In the Guadalupe case, the ceremonial landscape consists (referring to the indigenous terms mentioned in the authoritative seventeenth-century document *Nican Mopohua*) of 1) the *altepetl* of Mexico (i.e., the city of Mexico that was the capital of New Spain where the Spaniards ruled), 2) the *altepetl* of Tepeyac (i.e., the indigenous *altepetl*—hill of water—where natives worshiped their own mother goddess Tonantzin before and after the apparitions), and 3) the pilgrimage spaces in between the two locations.



This image of the Virgin of Guadalupe is in the huge church located at the foot of the sacred hill of Tepeyac several miles from the colonial center of Mexico City. The apparition stories narrate how her apparitions and conversations with Juan Diego as well as his walks in between the hill and the archbishop's palace map the formation of a religious borderlands.

The texts tell of a pattern of repeated ascents and descents of the sacred hill, the pilgrimage to the bishop's palace in the city, and the return to the hill. Guadalupe calls Juan Diego up the hill in the early morning and gives him instructions to descend the hill and go into the city to deliver the good news of her appearance and her command that a shrine is to be built in her honor on the sacred hill. He does so and is rejected, returning to the hill. He ascends the hill, delivers news of his rejection by the bishop, and begs to be let out of his task as the Virgin's messenger to Spanish authorities. He is ordered down the hill and into the city once again where he is rejected a second time, now with the demand that he produce a "sign" of the Virgin's appearance. He returns to Tepeyac (after first avoiding the task of delivering yet again the bad news of his rejection by the bishop) and after being greeted by Guadalupe is sent to the top of the hill where he gathers blooming flowers (although it is December and flowers are out of season) into his tilma or cloak. He is sent down the hill yet again and into the city where he presents, to an astonished bishop and his retinue, the spectacular image of La Virgen de Guadalupe imprinted on his tilma, as flower petals fall out onto the floor. The bishop, reversing the usual postures of submission and domination, kneels in front of Juan Diego and the Virgin's image, weeping and pledging to carry out her command to build a shrine in her honor outside of the city at the hill of Tepeyac. This back and forth action—ascend, descent, and journey to the city, retreat from the city, return to the city, and return to the hill—maps out what is to become, in the social history of Guadalupe devotion, the required, official ceremonial pathways between the city and the hill. This story of religious experiences and a ceremonial landscape also encodes a "borderlands epistemology"—the ways oppressed peoples recognize their identities in colonial situations by creating new, hybrid forms of knowledge. A borderlands epistemology is a new order of knowledge characterized by a consciousness among the oppressed about the permanently broken, uneven world they live in combined with new ritual and symbolic strategies for redefining the ultimate significance of their lives in the borderlands.

To understand the power that this borderlands epistemology has to create new religious expressions, (with members of the Spanish elite and the Indian Christians all doing the work of transculturation) attention must be given to competing significances (in scholarship and in the text itself) of the notion of the word *altepetl*. The Nahuatl word *altepetl* is a *difrasismo*, or indigenous linguistic form that consists of two distinct words that are combined to express a third meaning. There are examples of *difrasismos* from many aspects of daily and ritual life in Aztec Mexico, including some that are still used today such as: *in xochitl*, *in cuicatl*—"flower" and "song," respectively, meaning "poetry" or "wisdom." Another example of a *difrasismo* is *topco*, *petlacalco*—"in the bag," "in the box," together meaning "a secret." *In cueitl*, *in huipilli*—"the skirt," "the blouse," refers to "the sexual nature of women." One of the most common and meaningful metaphorical doublets was *in alt*, *in tepetl*, which means "water" and "hill," or "hill of water." In the opening

paragraphs of the *Nican Mopohua* we encounter a diversity of uses of the term including *in atl in tepetl Mexico* meaning “the city.” This is followed by a reference to “the *altepetls* all around,” meaning communities in the valley of Mexico. When Juan Diego descends Tepeyac, which is also an *altepetl* and walks into Mexico City it is stated that he “got inside the *altepetl*”³¹ (i.e., entered into the Spanish settlement). The wider sense of *altepetl* as a term meaning social community appears near the end of the text after the bishop is stunned by Guadalupe’s image on the tilma and moves it back out to the city. “There was movement in all the *altepetls* everywhere of people coming to see and marvel at her precious image.”³²

One group of scholars insists on the socio-political meaning of the term that referred to the indigenous social organization in the form of a city or town with a well-defined geographical and political organization. In other words, in the *Nican Mopohua*, some uses of *altepetl* meant a “city-state” like the new capital of New Spain with Juan de Zummaraga’s palace at its center. Some scholars have insisted that this is the fundamental meaning of the word—a town or city state with a clear number of constituent parts (i.e., barrios or sections).³³

But there is also a cosmological meaning to *altepetl*, which refers to the Mesoamerican-wide belief that sacred hills housed community ancestors and patron gods who would dispense good or punishment to the local community. This is a strong belief in Mexico even today and it sheds light on the more complex cultural meanings of the apparition stories. As a wave of recent scholarship has shown, patron deities and revered ancestors dwelled within the *altepetls* and *xochitepetls*, or “flowery mountains” and controlled the powers of germination and dispensed the “hearts,” (spiritual essences) of agriculture, culture, humans, and animals. As Xavier Noguez—a leading scholar of Tepeyacac and Guadalupe—writes about the patron deities who lived *within* the *altepetl* or *xochitepetl*,

This was the titular deity of a specific ethnic population, a group of immigrants, a city, a town, or even a neighborhood or ward. The patron god or divine ancestor (residing inside the *altepetl*) was both the creator and the protector of some large or small group of individuals. He guided his people on a pilgrimage and bestowed a promised land on them. . . . A pyramid with a temple at the top was built in his honor or he was worshiped on a hill that he had chosen as his residence.³⁴

The parallels between this indigenous conception of *altepetl* with its interior, fertilizing, protective patron or patroness and the Guadalupe of the *Nican Mopohua*

³¹ Lisa Sousa, Stafford Poole and James Lockhart, *The Story of Guadalupe: Luis Laso de la Vega’s Huei tlamahuiColtica of 1649* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) 67. The phrase in Nahuatl is “*oacico itic altepetl*.”

³² Ibid., 89. The phrase in Nahuatl is “*Auh huel cenmochi izcemaltepetl olin*.”

³³ This approach to *altepetl* has been emphasized by James Lockhart in *Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indian* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

³⁴ Xavier Noguez, “Altepetl,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures* (ed. David Carrasco; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 13.

are simply stunning. She resides or comes from within the hill, claims to be the patroness and protector of *all* the ethnic groups of New Spain, guides Juan Diego and eventually Juan de Zummaraga on local pilgrimages—Juan Diego to and fro between city and hill, and Juan Zummaraga out of the *altepetl* as city to the *altepetl* that is the space of the indigenous sacred hill. She absolutely insists that she be worshiped not in the *altepetl* of the city but on the *altepetl* where she has taken up her “residence.” What turns this story into a borderlands narrative is that her cult links the colonial city, the indigenous hill, and the territory in between into a ceremonial landscape. Today when pilgrims or tourists come to the monumental site of Guadalupe’s shrine, they typically pay homage to both the image of the Virgin *and the hill* where she appeared. Pilgrims visit, at the bottom of the hill, the latest of five huge churches that have housed her image since the seventeenth century. Pilgrims enter a moving walkway (there are two of them) which carries them slowly beneath her beautiful image as she gazes down on them. Then, if they are physically able, the visitor repeats Juan Diego’s ascent of the hill by climbing a stone stairway up to a small chapel, supposedly on the site where the Virgin first appeared to Juan Diego. In hushed and reverent tones, prayers are offered as pilgrims process around the shrine, gazing at paintings depicting the apparitions on the hill, Juan Diego’s visit to the Bishop’s palace, and her appearance on Juan Diego’s tilma in the city.

■ . . . hurricane . . .

In urging our theological and religious studies to further deprovincialize by attending to the colonial history and asymmetrical hybridities and creativity of Latin America, we can rethink our historical and interpretive positions on race in the Americas. As I wrote elsewhere,

As the white/black discourse has become multilayered and commercialized, it has also become an agent of exclusion of the many emerging narratives of race mixture in the history of the United States, and the struggles, oppressions, cultural traditions and creative engagements of Latino peoples. The social and racial complexity and dynamism of black-red-white sexual interactions, in the hands of the mainstream media, is becoming less visible. We are moving beyond the color line and it is the Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Guatemalans and others who are the “moving beyond.”³⁵

The hybrid is crossing the color line and identity bridges are being built and crossed that lead to a compelling question spoken by the Puerto Rican word artist Mária Fernández [Mariposa], “What does it mean to live in between?”³⁶ If we want to deepen our understanding of how borderlands realities of race and race mixture in the Americas have been experienced and lived and are becoming more

³⁵ David Carrasco, “Prologue,” in *The Future is Mestizo*, by Elizondo.

³⁶ Juan Flores, *From Bomba to Hip Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity* (Colombia University Press, 2000) 187.

apparent in the United States as a result of immigration from these other Americas, we must face up to the history of sexuality and the productions of *mestizaje* and *mulatez* in the Americas.

I employ the passage with the phrase “biblical hurricane” from García Márquez’s *Cien Anos de Soledad* because the word “hurricane,” which comes from the Caribbean Arawak *hurakán* and refers to both the storms and the storm god, *hurakán*, resonates with Africa and the Africanist presence in Latin America and Latino/a cultures. Hurricanes are often generated in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Africa and churn west toward Latin America, frequently cutting a swath through the Caribbean islands. Then they cross into or skirt Mexico and bring their threatening winds and waters into U.S. territory. This path reminds me of the “middle passage” of African peoples who came into the Americas, often through what is now Latin American territory, bringing their languages, gods, labor, suffering, and dreams. The combined evidence of two paintings and one chart will give us a sense that it is not only the future that is mestizo but the past as well. In what follows we shall examine “The Mulatto Gentlemen of Esmeraldas,”³⁷ a drawing of La Malinche (the translator for Cortes), and finally, a list of the *castas*, the racial types as defined in colonial Mexico and Peru.

■ Mulatto Gentlemen and their Clothes

The oldest surviving signed and dated painting from colonial South America is a group portrait of three Spanish-speaking Mulatto (African and Indian) males entitled “The Mulatto Gentlemen of Esmeraldas.” As a sign of his borderland status, the man in the middle, Don Francisco de Arobe, was the governor of a settlement on the western coast of Ecuador where 450 Christian Indians were ruled by Mulattos against whom they periodically rebelled. According to one commentary on the painting and related historical documents notes, “the portrait and the 1606 record show Don Francisco and his young companions as new people in a cultural sense—part African, part Indian, part Spanish Christian, and now American in their particular way, as social categories loosened and were reshaped on the margins of the Spanish empire.”³⁸ The picture, upon closer view, shows the newness and mixtures in which these men participated. The edges of their clothes (i.e., the lace collars and sleeves along with the satin and silk cloaks) identify them with Spanish style. But beneath each cloak each man

wears an Andean-style poncho made of European brocade like material. Underneath the poncho is a European style sleeved and buttoned shirt, with a fancy *lecuguilla*, or ruff. . . . In the portrait it is the golden ornaments piercing their faces and the necklaces of white seashells worn over the ponchos that distinguish them as men of the coast. These ornaments have a long tradition,

³⁷ See page 373 of this article.

³⁸ Ken Mills and William B. Taylor, *Colonial Spanish America: A Documentary History* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resource Books, 1998) 148.

there dating back to at least 500 B.C., as seen on Jama-Coaque and La Tolita ceramic figurines.³⁹

Another scholar has noted that their clothes are “nestled beneath flowing Chinese overgarments, which are, in turn, cut in a distinctly Andean fashion.”⁴⁰ In this case two “races” (African and Indian) and four cultural traditions (Indian, Spanish, Chinese, and African) are represented in this painting of human borderlands.

The racial and cultural complexity of this scene is enlarged in the widespread creation of *castas*, or people of “mixed race” who proliferated during the colonial period in many parts of Latin America but with special notice in Mexico, Peru, parts of Central America, and Brazil. In Mexico the master painter Miguel Cabrera who was himself a Mestizo living in Mexico City painted a fabulous set of *castas* portraits showing a mind-boggling range of racial mixtures. Unlike the United States, which today is still held in thrall by a black/white discourse (basically dishonest language about the history of race), these paintings show a very public recognition that races mixed, crossed boundaries, and became public forces of varying degrees of influence and power. Here is an extensive list of *castas* that illustrates the whirlwind and challenges of decipherments that race mixtures demanded in Latin America. The most simple version had eight categories of racial mixture, while some Spaniards established up to forty versions of sexual and ethnic complexities.

Spaniard and Indian produce a Mestizo
 From Spaniard and Mestiza, Castiza
 Spaniard and Castiza, produce Spaniard
 Mestizo and Indian makes Coyote
 Black and Spaniard makes Mulatto
 Mulatto and Spaniard makes Morisco
 Spaniard and Morisca makes Albino
 Spaniard and Albino makes a Black-Return-Backwards
 Black and Indian makes Wolf
 Wolf and Indian makes Zambaiga
 Zambaigo and Indian makes Albarazado
 Albarazada and Indian makes Chamizo
 Chamizo and Indian makes Cambuja
 From Albarrado and Indian, a Cachimboreta is born
 From Indian and Cambuja, a Wolf-Return-Backwards is born
 Wolf-Return-Backwards and Indian makes Hold-Yourself-in-Mid-Air⁴¹

If any list could challenge the tyranny of the black/white dichotomy that rules race discourse in the borderlands of the United States, it is this one.

³⁹ Mills and Taylor, *Colonial Spanish America*, 149.

⁴⁰ Kris Lane, *Quito, 1599* (Albuquerque, N.Mex.: University of New Mexico Press, 2002) xi.

⁴¹ See Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth Century Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) for an extensive discussion of these various categories.

■ La Malinche

The immense challenges of living in the borderlands of Mexico and the New World are symbolized in the life, mythology, and imagery of La Malinche, an indigenous woman at the crossroads of three cultures, Mayan, Aztec, and Spanish. She has become a multivalent symbol of the person who is placed in the middle of a contact zone, who straddles a cultural and linguistic borderland, and who somehow survives. The historical figure Malinche was a trilingual speaker born into an Aztec family at the beginning of the sixteenth century and later adopted into a Mayan-speaking community as a teenager. When Cortes discovered both her beauty and linguistic abilities, he took her as his aid and mistress and she became part of the bridge between Moctezuma and Cortes. La Malinche has become the subject of an enormous and still growing literature, both academic and literary,



La Malinche, the indigenous woman who translated between Moctezuma and Cortes and who had a child with Cortes is seen here straddling the two worlds of the Aztecs and the Spaniards. From the *Florentine Codex*, book 12. After Paso y Troncoso.

attempting to interpret her roles, cultural significance, and palimpsest nature.⁴² Speaking of her subversive, borderlands role in the racial mixtures of Mexico, Sandra Cypess writes,

Perhaps no native American woman has been as implicated in this particular discourse as the much maligned “La Malinche,” Cortés’s famous interpreter and lover. From nationalist Mexican rhetoric to twentieth-century Chicana feminist works, La Malinche, or Doña Marina, has consistently been dragged through the mud of rape, sexual promiscuity, treachery, treason, and dupery.⁴³

The radical impurity of this women’s reputation comes in part because the main sexual interactions among Spaniards and Indian women were informal and under the control of aggressive European males who initially saw indigenous (and African women) as the spoils of the wars of conquest. In many parts of Latin America, the conquest was really the conquest of women. What makes this a story about a sexual borderlands is that the liaisons—more often rapes than love affairs—upset a fundamental Spanish binary named the “Republica de los Espanoles” and the “Republica de los Indios.” When the mestizos and the mulattos appeared on the scene in growing numbers it was uncomfortably clear that a “new world” of sex and identity was being formed. In the accompanying image, we see the key player, La Malinche standing in the middle of representatives of the two republics. She is a “straddler” of this borderlands in linguistic and sexual terms. Karen Powers in her close study of sexuality in colonial Latin America illuminates the struggles that La Malinche and other women faced.

Whether they were forced into or chose these unions, these women also lived their lives between two worlds. . . . They straddled, painfully, the indigenous world of their family, ethnic, and cultural loyalties on the one hand and the Spanish world of their male partners, colonial oppressors, and mestizo children on the other.⁴⁴

■ Models Moved by Borderlands: Asymmetrical Hybridity

For some time now these combinations, contact zones, and mixtures have been interpreted through the model of “hybridity.” This model argues that ritual participants faced with different religious traditions, such as Catholicism and African or Indian traditions, “pick and choose” elements of each and create (i.e., hybridize) an emerging religious world view and practice that—in the words of Elizabeth Wilder Weismann—produces “something new and different

⁴² For a superb summary of the cultural significance and criticisms of La Malinche, see Sandra Cypess, “La Malinche as Palimpsest,” in *History of the Conquest of Mexico by Bernal Díaz del Castillo* (ed. David Carrasco; Albuquerque, N. Mex.: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

⁴³ Karen Powers, forthcoming.

⁴⁴ Powers, forthcoming.

from anything else in the world.”⁴⁵ I assent to this historical and dynamic view as articulated in a number of works. But my reading of both Mexican colonial “hybridities” and Mexican-American religious expressions leads me to insist on the persistence of an “asymmetrical hybridity.” By this I mean that encoded in, and sometimes concealed within, Latino religious expressions is the *legacy of and protest against* the devastating social, political, and economic exploitations and ideological abuses that founded and constructed the relationships between triumphant European church traditions and their lighter skinned representative and African and indigenous peoples, symbols, and practices which were under assault in the long formative exchanges between very different cultural traditions. In my view of “asymmetrical hybridity,” the productions of numerous Latin American religious practices that were “new and different from anything else in the world” were also living memorials to the ways local peoples remembered, (or were cued to remember when they wanted to forget), negotiated with and resisted socially degraded positions. When we participate in *Día de los Muertos* or the anniversary of the apparition of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* there is more at work than creative hybridities or comfortable unions of the Spanish *Virgen de Guadalupe* with the traces of an Aztec goddess cult. These and many ritual practices are the work of active memory, of uncovering again the painful history of the contact zones, the colonial encounters, the wars of conquest, and the work of rebellion. This memory work shows people seeking access to the spiritual power of Spanish invaders while also reviving access to indigenous traditions (from Africa or the Americas) and creating new forms of religiosity. Embedded in some of these rites of passage is the memory of asymmetrical suffering as well as critical and creative responses to the following: the conquest and death of millions of Indians, the complex sexual and social forces that led to mestizaje and mullatez, the introduction of new diseases and the cultivation of myriad forms of social and physical suffering such as slavery. The asymmetries of conquest—with its many days of the dead and the assertion of colonial Mariology, among many others—are what are hybridized.

■ Deciphering the Borderlands We Are Living In

As scholars of people’s worlds and rhythms of life we are, in part, like Aureliano in the biblical hurricane at the end of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* who is deciphering the instant in which he is living. In this essay I attempt to decipher our living in what I have called the “Brown Millennium”⁴⁶ and offer a hope, if not a prophecy, that we can decipher its borderlands and what is at stake for those who share in its tragic history before we become the fearful whirlwind that is already in the centers of some cities and elsewhere poised at our common horizon. As an

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Wilder Weismann, *Mexico in Sculpture 1521–1821* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950) 5.

⁴⁶ See my “The Future is Mestizo: We Are the Shades,” in *The Future is Mestizo*, by Elizondo, xvii–xxvi.

historian of religions, it is my hope that we can learn and write a larger and more human history of the Americas that engages with all the aspects of our common borderlands.

During my public discussion with Samuel T. Huntington, I came to realize how far we have to go in learning about the long history of border crossings. One example will make the task clear. In his defense of the priority of the Anglo-Protestant culture, Professor Huntington gives ample attention to the variety of culinary metaphors depicting the nature of assimilation that has strengthened, in his view, American identity. He reviewed the metaphors used by scholars such as, the melting pot, salad, mixing bowl, weaving machine, pipeline, dumping ground, as well as his own, tomato soup. Or, better yet, “Anglo Protestant tomato soup.” He wants:

immigrants and their descendents to duly adopt the standard Anglo Saxon cultural patterns. . . . The culinary metaphor is an Anglo Protestant tomato soup to which immigration adds celery, croutons, spices, parsley and other ingredients that enrich and diversify the taste, but which are absorbed into what remains fundamentally tomato soup.⁴⁷

In my response I raised the importance of remembering who is picking tomatoes in this country. Moreover, the word *tomato*, a word Professor Huntington appears to think has an Anglo-Saxon origin, comes from the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs, the word *tomatl*. The European Cortes and the Spaniards ate their first *tomatl* in Mexico. However, they did not know that tomatoes were originally cultivated in Peru over 3000 years ago and slowly migrated across geographical and political borders to Mexico where it got the name that we use today without even knowing that it is a Pre-Hispanic term. In fact the most handsome men in Aztec society were referred to as *Iuhquin tlachictli, iuhquin tomatl*, “Something smooth, something like a tomato.”

Spaniards took the tomato and its name to Europe where it crossed the borders into Italy. The Italians made it their own and called it the *pomo doro* “apple of gold.” Only much later does the tomato, as word and food, get to Anglo-Saxon lands, although it appears they did not learn much about the many ways the Italians had enriched its uses in food and art. The point is that Professor Huntington’s metaphor at its origin is itself an example of transculturation with its roots in pre-Hispanic cultures though he seems completely unaware of the border crossings of his culinary choice. This is one reason I think of the borderlands not only in terms of place but as a perspective and lens through which to interpret and understand the dramatically changing religious, social, and cultural landscapes in which we are all living today. For even much of the food we eat and share—and the symbols that they represent—comes from the borderlands.

⁴⁷ Huntington, *Who Are We?*, 129.

Between Biography and Ethnography

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My point of departure in this essay is David Carrasco's Convocation Address at the Harvard Divinity School in September 2006. Speaking of the borderlands between Mexico and the United States, Carrasco projects an image of a vexed and ambiguous zone that is not merely geographic or political; it defines an existential situation of being betwixt and between, of struggle and suffering, that Karl Jaspers sums up in the term *Grenzsituationen* (borders/limit situations).¹ The frontier throws up images of borderline experiences, of a destabilized and transgressive consciousness in which "dreams, repressed memories, psychological transferences and associations" possess greater presence than they do in ordinary waking life, and religious experiences emerge from the unconscious like apparitions.² This interplay between borderlands and borderline phenomena—between "the differences we have with others and the conflicts within ourselves"³ also finds expression in the work of

¹ Jaspers contrasts *Grenzsituationen* with *Alltagssituationen* (everyday situations). While we are able to "gain an overview" of our everyday situations and get beyond them, limit situations "possess finality"; "they are like a wall against which we butt, against which we founder." Karl Jaspers, *Existenzerhellung* (vol. 2 of *Philosophie*; 3 vols.; Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1932) 178–79. For an account of *Grenzsituationen* in English, see Karl Jaspers: *Basic Philosophical Writings* (ed., trans., and intro. Edith Ehrlich, Leonard H. Ehrlich, and George B. Pepper; New York: Humanity Books, 2000) 97. Though Adorno treats the term "frontier-situations" as part of a jargon of authenticity—on a par with "being-in-the-world," "individual existence," and "heroic endurance"—a way of "usurping religious-authoritarian pathos without the least religious content," I see it as a way of escaping from the two dominant discourses of our time, the first that reduces all meaning to political economy, the second to religious belief or doctrine. In my view, it is precisely this tendency to politicize or intellectualize religious experience that the existential concept of Situation helps us to overcome. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (trans. E. F. N. Jephcott; London: Verso, 1978) 152.

² David Carrasco, "Desire and the Frontier: Apparitions from the Unconscious in The Old Gringo," in *The Novel in the Americas* (ed. Raymond Leslie Williams; Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1992) 102.

³ *Ibid.*, 106.

Gloria Anzaldúa. “*Mestiza* consciousness,” she observes, may be identified with a “juncture ... where phenomena collide.”⁴ This implies “a shock culture, a border culture, a third country” where migrants find themselves at the limits of what they can endure, border patrol agents are stretched beyond the limits of what they can control, and intellectuals find that orthodox ways of describing and analyzing the world do not do justice to the experiences involved.

These images of the borderlands reinforce, for me, a conviction that *all* lives and lifeworlds are more complex and variable than is suggested by the paradigmatic discourses of both the academy and the popular media. To do greater justice to lived experience we need to put ourselves quite literally in the place of the other, seeing the world from his or her standpoint, bringing together insider and outsider perspectives. But the ethnographic method of participant-observation is, in itself, not enough; we need novel forms of academic writing and interdisciplinary thought *that place non-European and European epistemologies and theologies on the same footing*. That is to say that borderlands suggest sites of intransitive, unstable, and intersubjective meanings that call into question the kinds of reductive and essentializing language that make human *experience* appear to be coterminous with the conventional categories of religious, cultural or social *identity* that people use in *representing* their experience to themselves and others.

■ Borders and Borderlands in the History of Anthropology

For much of its history, sociocultural anthropology typically conflated singular and collective identities. One read about “the” Trobriand Islanders or “the” Tallensi as though a people living in the same place, participating in the same economy, and having roughly similar views about boat building or begetting, sorcery or sociality seldom if ever called their lifeways into question and only changed their ways of thinking and acting when the outside world forced itself upon them. Though anthropologists like Raymond Firth showed that structure does not preclude the exercise of choice in the organization of everyday life, the general tendency was not to focus on the relative conviction with which customary beliefs were held, the competence with which roles were performed, the strategies whereby marriages were made, or the singular stories people might tell, but on the rules people followed, the roles they filled, and the integrity and continuity of the social systems of which they were a part. One consequence of this way of doing anthropology was to create discursive boundaries between various human polities and perpetuate the popular illusion that non-Western peoples were essentially *unlike* us. Few anthropologists reflected publicly on what “we” might have in common with “them,” or how “they” might differ amongst themselves. Thus, totemism, animism, anthropomorphism, witchcraft, and sorcery were all assumed to be *sui generis* phenomena typical of pre-modern societies, and until Lévi-Strauss demonstrated the illusory and ideological

⁴ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999) 101.

character of these terms⁵ few anthropologists acknowledged either the empirical diversity of the phenomena that were spuriously assembled under these headings, or the obvious similarity of certain modes of thought that were labelled quite differently in different parts of the world. Rather than deepen our understanding of the ways in which the human mind creates systems of identification (as in “totemic belief”), or how human beings express ambivalence toward outsiders (in witchcraft accusations, xenophobia, scapegoating, and the institutions of homeland security), these exoticizing terms served mainly to distance the rational subject—the anthropologist—from the supposedly irrational other—the object of his or her observations.

My own assumption is that societies differ not in their essences but in the ways in which they manage universally identical existential issues—keeping body and soul alive, bringing new life into the world, coping with separation and loss, creating ontological security. These coping strategies are, I believe, variations on ubiquitous themes that are grounded in the evolutionary history of our species. Each and every one of us, Kiwi or Kiriwinian, is simultaneously the same as *and* different from everyone else “who ever lived, lives, or will live.”⁶ In other words, our humanity is both shared *and* singular, and our identity consists in both being identical or the same (*idem*) *and* uniquely ourselves in contrast to others (*ipse*).⁷ For Hannah Arendt, however, human distinction does not automatically imply otherness. Although all human beings are distinctive, she argues, none is absolutely other, for we share the same capacity for interacting and communicating with one another, based on a common evolutionary heritage and vague perceptions of a common humanity. A striking example of this is Bob Connolly’s and Robin Anderson’s film, *First Contact*. At first sight, the New Guinea highlanders see Leahy, Dwyer, and their Papuan bearers, as reincarnations of their own ancestral dead—“like people you see in a dream.” But as curiosity overcomes fear, people see that these are not spirit beings, but variants of themselves. As Kirupano Eza’e observed, years after the event: “One of our people hid, and watched them [the white men] going to excrete. He came back and said, ‘Those men from heaven went to excrete over there.’ When they had left many men went to take a look. When they saw that it smelt bad, they said, ‘Their skin might be different, but their shit smells bad like ours.’”⁸ To make a person other, one arrogates Being entirely to oneself, and makes of the other a mere object of one’s actions, one’s judgment, one’s compassion or one’s theorising. Sameness is played down—“sacrificed” one might say—and difference played up

⁵ Claude Lévi Strauss, *Totemism* (trans. Rodney Needham; Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) 8.

⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (trans. Kathleen Blamey; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 2–3, 116.

⁸ Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson, *First Contact: New Guinea’s Highlanders Encounter the Outside World* (New York: Viking, 1987) 44.

until a radical alterity, a pseudo speciation, an essential incompatibility defines relations between self and not-self.

While the anthropology I encountered as a student at Auckland and Cambridge tended to focus on differences—matrilineal/patrilineal, centralized/uncentralized, dionysian/apollonian—and anthropologists made their careers on the basis of being specialists in specific cultural areas, spokesmen for “their” people, and rarely committing themselves, except in seminars, to serious reflection on human plurality, the advent of structuralism and sociobiology brought universals back into vogue. Then globalization became the catchword, with diffusion, diaspora, and hybridization defining the postmodern condition and notions of systematicity and boundedness, both ethnic and discursive, rendered passé. Yet this same period saw a proliferation of life stories and life histories as well as an ongoing interest in regional ethnography so that we seem to be caught, as much as ever, between the Scylla of particularism and the Charybdis of universalism.

■ A Singular Universal

My aim in this essay is to suggest ways in which we can overcome this antinomy between the particular and the universal by exploring what Sartre refers to as the “singular universal”⁹ and Michael Herzfeld calls “ethnographic biography”¹⁰—in which individual lives and cultural circumstances are neither ontologized, nor polarized, but seen as mutually arising and contrapuntal aspects of our continually shifting sense of ourselves as being both uniquely a “you” or a “me” and members of a class or a culture, as in “We, the Tikopia.”

Let me begin with a critique of our tendency to see the singular and the collective, the individual and the group, the local and the global as designating ontologically discrete domains. The problem here is akin to the longstanding philosophical problem of unravelling the relationship between percepts and concepts—the relationship, for example, between our empirical experience on the one hand, and our theorizing, rationalizing, narrativizing, and interpreting on the other. As long as these dichotomies are substantivized we are going to get into trouble. But if we bracket out the question as to what in the world these terms actually stand for, we are free to see them phenomenologically, as appearances and effects. Our interest thus shifts from questions as to what the terms refer to “in reality” to questions as to how they serve our interests, and how they may be used to affect the way we *experience* the world, not simply the way we behave.

⁹ “A man is never an individual. It would be better to call him a singular universal; totalized and thereby universalized by his period, he retotalizes it by reproducing himself in it as a singularity. Universal by the singular universality of human history, singular by the universalizing singularity of his projects, he demands to be studied from both sides.” Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert 1821–1857* (trans. Carol Cosman; 5 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981–1993) 1:7–8.

¹⁰ Michael Herzfeld, *Portrait of a Greek Imagination: An Ethnographic Biography of Andreas Nenedakis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

As a methodological first principle we focus not on *relata*—whether individuals or societies—but on what Hannah Arendt called “the subjective in-between”¹¹ and on that which comes into being in this intermediate space of human interest and interaction. Bypassing both the individual subject and culture as *sui generis* phenomena, we seek to explore the space of appearances—where that which is *in potentia* becomes *in presentia*—disclosed, drawn out, brought forth, given presence or embodied. Object-relations theory is particularly helpful in making critical events central to ethnographic analysis. Culture, writes D. W. Winnicott, is “in fact neither a matter of inner psychic reality nor a matter of external reality.”¹² Comparing culture with transitional phenomena and play, Winnicott goes on to argue that culture is a “common pool . . . into which individuals and groups of people may contribute, and from which we may all draw *if we have somewhere to put what we find*.”¹³ This means, for Winnicott, that culture is not some kind of ready-made, omnipresent composite of habits, meanings and practices that are located *in* the individual or *in* the environment, but a *potentiality*, aspects of which will be realized and experienced variously in the course of our interactions with others, as well as our relationships to the everyday environments and events in which we find ourselves. What is foregrounded one moment will be backgrounded the next while what is focal for one person may be peripheral for another.

■ Duty and Blessings

Early in my first fieldwork in northern Sierra Leone (1969–1970), I became familiar with two crucial Kuranko concepts—that of duty (*wale*) and that of blessings (*duwe*). One’s duty is “that which you have to do”—the actions, obligations, and demeanour that come with one’s role as a chief, a praise-singer, a wife, a farmer, or whatever. This is why *wale* is also work—the work one does in order to enact one’s role, uphold custom, and play one’s part in the order of things. A common phrase, used in greeting a person and in acknowledging a gift, approving words well spoken, or behavior that conforms to the ideal, is “*i n wale*” (literally “you and work,” meaning, you are doing the right thing by your forebears, you are doing the right thing by your wife, husband, brothers, subjects, etc.). But while *wale* emphasizes a person’s agency—his *savoir-faire*, his social *nous*, his personal conduct—the notion of *duwe* denotes the *outcome* of working well, which is *baraka*,¹⁴ the state of being blessed. Thus, the exemplary conduct of a paternal ancestor bestows good fortune, or blessings, on his descendants. However, these blessings come to a person through his or her mother. If she is a hard-working, faithful and dutiful wife to her

¹¹ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 183.

¹² Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) 113.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 116 [emphasis in text].

¹⁴ *Baraka*, from the Arabic, is often used as a synonym for *duwe*, but the conventional way of accepting a gift is to say either “*i n wale*”, or “*n ko baraka*” (I say blessedness), in order to approve or bless the person or party who has symbolically affirmed the value of your life.

husband, then her children will receive the blessings of their patrilineal forebears, who become *duwe dannu* (blessed children). If she fails in her duty by being lazy, unfaithful, or disobedient, the path along which the patrilineal blessings flow will become blocked, and her children will be cursed. This is why Kuranko say one's destiny is in one's mother's hands and cite several adages in support of this idea: *ke l dan sia; muse don den; ke l den wo bolo* ("A man has many children; a woman raises them; his children are in her hands"), and *i na l kedi sebene, i wole karantine kedi* ("The book your mother wrote is what you are reading now")—which is to say that one's actions and disposition are direct reflections of one's mother's actions and disposition.

Ideally, there is a complementarity between work and blessings. A person who is blessed is disposed to work hard and do his or her duty. A person who works hard and does his or her duty, brings blessings to his or her family. But in practice people may give very different existential *emphases* to these cultural ideas.

Consider the relationship between what is pre-given, culturally or genetically, and what emerges in the course of a relationship over time. There is a Kuranko adage: bearing a child is not hard; raising a child is (*dan soron ma gbele, koni a ma kole*). The irony here is that nothing would seem to be more difficult (*gbele* means hard, difficult, or problematic) than bringing a child into the world, especially when infant mortality is high and many women die in childbirth; but the fact remains that the labor of nursing a child through its earliest years, caring for a child through times of famine and illness, protecting a child from the pitfalls of a politically unstable world, and working hard for a hard-hearted or indifferent husband so that one's child is blessed by its patrilineal ancestors amounts to greater hardship than the labor of giving birth. At the same time, this adage implies that although the bond between mother and child *begins* with birth, it is actually born of the intimate interactions and critical events that characterize primary intersubjectivity. In other words, it is the intense protolinguistic relationship between mother and infant, mediated by synchronous movement and affect attunement, including smell, touch, gaze, sympathetic laughter and tears, cradling, lulling embraces, interactive play and the rhythmic interchanges of motherese that creates the primary bond. To speak of kinship as a "natural" bond, or to invoke images of shared substances—blood (consanguinity), breast milk, semen, placenta, genes—or of common parentage, names, place and ancestry, *seems* to explain the strength of kinship ties. But such figurative language is a way of *retrospectively* and *selectively* acknowledging those experiences of a relationship that have confirmed a moral ideal. This is what William James meant when he says that, "Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact an event, a process; the process of verifying itself."¹⁵

Indeed, the very idea of kinship is an idealization, the lived reality of which is never covered or predicated by the terms with which it is conceptualized and

¹⁵ William James, *Pragmatism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978) 97.

imagined. Accordingly, “natural” symbols such as of blood and bone, or “moral” terms such as amity and love are not axioms; they are what we talk about when we talk about life. They are ways we express our sense of the depth, intensity and binding power of what emerges in the course of any intimate relationship that weathers life’s vicissitudes over time. In truth, what we call moral bonds are often habits we have formed by living with others; but the virtue we assign to familiar routines and our attachment to significant others is largely a way of dignifying relationships that simply grew—possessing a life and inertia that was greater than the work we actively put into them. Contrary to what we often believe, our symbolic constructs and moral or jural concepts do not necessarily explain why we do what we do; rather, they are *ex post facto* ways in which we evaluate and systematize what has, often as not, taken place without their mediation.

I now turn to the question of birth and worth. Despite a worldview that makes human worth relative to birth order, estate, caste membership, and rank, individual dispositions such as intelligence, courage, or moral fibre do not, in practice, conform to the ideal. My key informant, Ketí Ferenke Koroma, explained this to me by punning on the word *kina* that, depending on a subtle inflection, can mean either “beehive” or “elder.” Just as the word *kina* can have very different meanings depending on how it is pronounced, so a nominal elder can, depending on his behavior, fulfil or fall short of the expectations associated with his position. Ketí Ferenke’s argument was that an elder could forfeit the right to be considered superior if he behaved unjustly or idiotically. “A person might be designated an elder, a status superior,” he said, “but if he acted like a child he was a child.” “Superiority,” he observed, “derived not only from being born first, or from being big and powerful; it also stemmed from one’s social *nous*, one’s moral courage, or one’s cleverness.” Not surprisingly, Ketí Ferenke was a brilliant storyteller and astute informant, but not the first-born of the first-born!

A second example, again drawn from my earlier Kuranko ethnography, is equally telling. Kuranko traditional medicine is conventionally divided into three categories—curative, prophylactic and protective, and lethal¹⁶ and during his apprenticeship any medicine-master (*besetigi*) becomes adept in all three. But what defines a practitioner’s duty or work? Is it to draw on both his curative and lethal powers if public consensus gives him the right to do so? Or is his “duty” partly a question of his own individual judgement? Here, we need to have recourse to both ethnography and biography if we are to understand why a particular medicine-master should decide, as did my key informant Saran Salia Sano, to devote his energy and expertise to protecting the vulnerable and curing the sick rather than selling his services to the envious and aggrieved, or using his powers to prosecute private vendettas through sorcery.¹⁷ And not only do we need methods for moving between

¹⁶ Michael Jackson, *Paths Toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) 24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

cultural and idiosyncratic fields of experience, encompassing both intrapsychic reality (*idion*) as well as the reality of that which is held in common (*koinon*); we need ways of writing ethnography that do justice to both the singular and the shared, and ground-rules for deciding when it is more parsimonious to focus on nature or nurture, the cultural or the personal.¹⁸

I now explore the indeterminate relationship between duty and blessings, power and influence, through a biographical comparison between two brothers that I knew for more than thirty years—Sewa and Noah Marah.¹⁹

Noah was my field assistant during my early fieldwork in northern Sierra Leone between 1969 and 1972. His brother, who had been a member of parliament in the first post-independence government, was out of politics at this time, and managing the Alitalia agency in Freetown. Although I became a close friend with each of the men, they were never, themselves, at all close, and I was always disconcerted by the way Noah would diligently keep his distance from his elder brother, circumspect, deferential, and taciturn, or how Sewa would, despite being aware of how fond I was of her younger brother, deride him as an idler and wastrel, always looking to others to rescue him from difficulties, rather than assume responsibility for himself.

One afternoon in January 2002, I was walking down a steep road in Freetown when a heavy lorry, belching black smoke, lumbered up the hill toward me. Painted in large letters above the windshield were the words “Hard Work.” No sooner had the lorry passed, than a red poda poda appeared. Its logo was “Blessings.” This coincidence set me to thinking about the very different ways in which Sewa and Noah explained the forces that shape a person’s destiny. For while both brothers shared the view that the course of any person’s life is influenced by the decisions and efforts he or she makes as well as by luck and contingency, Sewa and Noah placed very different emphases on the importance of hard work and blessings.

“You are what you make of yourself,” was Sewa’s constant refrain, when upbraiding the young men who fetched his bath water in the mornings, washed and ironed his clothes, helped him dress, carried his bags, and attended him. “If you don’t work hard you’ll get nothing in this world. You must be honest and straightforward. Young people today want something for nothing. They are not serious. Even my own children,” Sewa confided; “I often think about them all night long. I don’t sleep for thinking of them.” And Sewa told me how much he wanted his sons to “do well,” to be men of substance, status, and influence. That they were waiters in London filled him with shame. “Would I want people to know my sons are servants?” he asked. “These useless jobs. Living underground because they do not have residence visas.” When I pointed out to him that Abu and Chelmanseh were doing courses in hotel management in London, and were not simply waiters, Sewa said he wanted to be proud of them, he didn’t want his sons to disappoint him. “These things weigh

¹⁸ George Devereux, *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences* (The Hague: Mouton, 1978) 118.

¹⁹ Sewa and Noah died within a few months of each other in 2003.

on my mind,” he said. “After I am dead, what will happen? I wish Rose [Sewa’s wife] would speak to them, urge them, tell them these things.”

One evening, as we drove past the amputee camp in Murraytown, where I had been spending some of my time, Sewa made a strange comment. “They sell everything they are given,” he said, as if to suggest that I should not pity the amputees, since they were very capable of fending for themselves.

Noah, like me, found such opinions difficult to accept. “It’s painful,” he said, “when people tell you that you are not serious. Because often there is no work; often people have nothing, and they have no connections. I bear Sewa no grudge, but it pains me when he makes these remarks about my not being serious, for if I were not serious I would not have gone all out to support him in his campaigns in 1957 and 1962, and when he contested the Paramount Chieftaincy in Nieni in 1964.”

Where Sewa invoked the Kuranko notion of *wale* — “What you have to do,” as Sewa put it; “doing your duty by others” — Noah spoke of the overriding importance of *duwe*, or blessings. But for Noah, the emphasis was not on the blessings he might earn through his own hard work, or his dutiful acceptance of his role as younger brother, but on the blessings that simply came to one, by virtue of being the child of blessed parents, or through one’s association with a benefactor. You might be wealthy, well-educated, or well-born, Noah explained, but if you lack blessings, nothing will work out well for you in life. In the old days, it wasn’t easy to command respect, to have people heed your words at a public gathering. If you were not blessed, you would not be able to impose your will on people, to speak with authority, or command respect, and you would be called *danka dan* (accursed child). But if you were blessed, this would make up for what you lacked in wealth, education, or social standing. “Thus,” said Noah, “I tell my children that though I am not educated and am poor, I have blessings, and this is why people listen to me, heed my advice, and respect my opinions”.

When I asked Noah if education, wealth, and hard work could compensate for not having blessings, he said, “No,” and cited the Kuranko adage, *latege saraka saa* — no sacrifice can cut fate; nothing a person does can alter his destiny.

Noah’s fatalism undoubtedly explained his formidable patience. Paradoxically, it also explained his tendency to place his hope in others, to look for rescuers, benefactors, and saviors. And it underlay his habit of complaining bitterly about the people who had disappointed him in life, or shut him out. Indeed, his entire life had been a search for a mentor, a benefactor, a lucky break that would change the odds that seemed so stacked against him.

During my visit to Sierra Leone in early 2003, revising my first draft of Sewa’s *lifestory*²⁰ and listening to Noah recount his experiences during the war, I became increasingly fascinated with the struggle for power and presence in these men’s lives. Both had been born into a chiefly lineage, and from an early age had imagined themselves to be worthy successors to their powerful forebears. Indeed, when I first

²⁰ Michael Jackson, *In Sierra Leone* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

met Noah, his interest was in secular, not occult, power, and his ambition was to follow his elder brother, Sewa into national politics. But instead of striking out on his own, he found himself at his elder brother's beck and call. In his own account of his early life, a series of entwined critical events defined his destiny. As a small boy, he was pledged to a Mende trader in the south by his elder brother, presumably in lieu of payment of a debt. Of these years of exile, Noah would recall bitterly that his elder brother had "sold him into slavery." In 1957, only a few years after finding his way home, Noah's father died.

"Since my father's death I have been paddling my own canoe," he once told me, and went on to recount what it had been like in the years after Tina Kome died, when he went to live with his married sisters in Kabala and attend school.

"It was not an easy time I had then. I remember one time my sister Mantene remarked that my father had petted me; now that my father was dead I would have to look after myself. So I was there, struggling—going to find food, laundering, doing everything in the morning before going to school. I had to take care of myself."

But if Noah felt times were difficult, there was always rescue at hand.

"I remember one Lebanese, Mr. Hassan Mansour, who took pity on me at one time and told me I could always go to him when I needed help. As a small boy I often went to Hassan Mansour."

In 1959 Noah passed his selective entrance exam and went to high school in Magburaka. But in 1962, in the run-up to the first general elections after Independence, Noah was obliged to travel the length and breadth of *ferensola* (Kuranko country), canvassing votes for his elder brother. When he returned to school, the principal warned him that further absenteeism would not be tolerated. So, when his elder brother summoned him in 1964 to help with another political campaign, Noah's school career came to an end.

"I couldn't go on because of hardship. I had to leave school and return to Kabala."

"I was there in Kabala for some time, struggling. One day I went to Lansana Kamara's shop to buy kerosene, and met Wing Commander Macdonald, the then district officer. We talked for a while and he asked me whether I would like to work. I told him I would, but there were no jobs. He asked me to find him in his office the next morning. I went to the office and found him. He offered me work as a native administration court clerk. But I had nothing of my own. He had to give me twenty leones to buy some soap and clothes.

"After I had been there for some time, he posted me to Musaia in the Fula Saba Dembelia chiefdom. I was there doing the work. Then I decided to leave the native administration work because I felt I was deteriorating educationally. I then decided to pick up teaching. I was given an appointment in the District Council school, the same school I had earlier attended as a pupil. So I was there fighting hard. At this time, while my contemporaries were still at school, I was struggling hard to earn my living.

"Then I came into contact with Dr. Michael Jackson, who had come from Cambridge to do his research."

Of his earlier life in Kabala, Noah spoke of being under his brother's thumb, describing this period as one of domestic servitude. Despite the possibilities of being rescued from his situation by benefactors, his life was reduced to "sweeping, cleaning, fetching wood and water. Virtual slavery."

A turning point seemed to arrive with the general election of 1967 when Noah decided to run as a candidate for the opposition APC [All People's Congress]. His ambition was quickly frustrated. Not only did Sir Albert Margai [the leader of the SLPP, Sierra Leone People's Party, and Prime Minister] request him not to run, but his mother refused to countenance any public competitiveness between her two sons. "She began to pester me, crying to me all the time that she would be blamed, and people would mock us if I ran against my brother. She said, 'People will laugh at us and say, Oh, these two brothers fighting each other!' You see. So, mindful of all this, I dropped out."

It so happened that the SLPP lost the 1967 elections, and the APC came to power. "From this moment on," Noah said, "my life became very difficult. I was harassed. At one time I was detained. I had met a man called Babande in the village of Koba, who asked if I could help him find a cure for his sickness. My cousin Dr. Osayon Kamara was then at the Kabala hospital. So I told Babande to come to Kabala, and promised I would take him to my cousin. What I did not know was that Babande was a *juju* man (sorcerer). The APC people in Kabala knew this, and when they found out that I had sponsored Babande's trip from Koba to Kabala they had him arrested, and accused me of hiring him to kill the prime minister, who was then Siaka Stevens, as well as Dr. Forna [Minister of Finance] and S. I. Koroma [the deputy prime minister]. The police came to my house that same night and arrested me. I was charged with sorcery. But the case against me failed, and I was discharged. But District Officer Gorvie, and the then Paramount Chief Baruwa Mansaray, decided I should be tried in the Native Court. This time I was fined fifty leones. I immediately came to Freetown to hire a lawyer and file an appeal against my conviction. Cyrus Rogers-Wright was willing to help me, but when I told S. B. what I planned to do he ordered me to drop the case."

Let me try to spell out the implications of this critical moment in Noah's life, when he was forced to renounce his political ambitions and was accused of sorcery. To do so it is useful to recall Winnicott's notion of culture as a kind of potential space in which certain elements are foregrounded and others backgrounded at any one moment in time. Transposed to the field of individual consciousness, this contrast is one between focal and peripheral frames of awareness. "Lived experience," observes Sartre, "is always simultaneously present to itself and absent from itself."²¹ Although, at any given moment, we have a fair idea as to who we are

²¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism* (trans. John Matthews; London: Verso, 1983) 42.

and what we might become, we tend to be blind to who we are for others and to the many unknown forces that may bear upon our fate. In Noah's case, he knows himself solely in terms of his desire to become a man of substance and influence. His consciousness is fixed upon a specific objective, and set upon a specific course—the assumption of political office. He recognizes no other possible form of being for himself. But when thwarted in his desire to realize himself politically, his ambition fastens on an image that has, until that moment, lain dormant in his mind—the image of occult power.

Such transformations seldom occur painlessly; they are the outcomes of crisis. Accused of sorcery, this alternative form of power suddenly presents itself to Noah as another way of seeing himself—an *analogue*, as Sartre calls it, because this new identity is initially mere potentiality, an object that is still absent and unreal.²² In an act of what Sartre refers to as “provocative impotence,”²³ Noah now imagines himself, not as someone who will simply follow in his brother's footsteps but as someone potentially capable of accessing higher powers and possessing great influence. Moreover, he now becomes free. For in beginning to imagine he might actively become the person that he has been accused of being, he turns a stigmatizing identification to his own advantage, liberates himself from the humiliating position of existing in his brother's shadow, and acquires powers that, while marginal, nonetheless have a legitimate place in the social order.

The youngest in a family of eight, Noah's acute sense of being “shut out,” as he put it, was, I suppose, a factor in drawing him toward the world of the occult. Thwarted in his more youthful ambition to enter politics and become a man of means, Noah became increasingly attracted to what James Fernandez calls “the occult search for capacity.”²⁴ In a country where the gap between expectations and opportunity is so great, “wild” powers such as witchcraft, sorcery, banditry, and religious zealotry have become increasingly alluring as avenues to recognition—ways of symbolically compensating for one's sense of exclusion and insignificance. During our last conversation, sitting together in the downstairs parlor at Sewa's house in Freeetown, the daylight fading, Noah spoke to me of his occult gifts.

There was a certain Dr. Kawa, Noah said, a senior consultant surgeon at Connaught hospital. Kawa's sister had borne a grudge against her brother from early childhood, jealous of his successes in life and his prestigious social position. So she bewitched him. He began to suffer dizzy spells and blackouts, sometimes during surgery. When several patients died, Kawa was suspended. He became known as Killer Kawa. Noah, who had acquired the powers of an alpha or mori-man, “cleansed” the doctor. The sister died not long afterward, punished, according

²² Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Imaginaire. Psychologie-phénoménologique de l'imagination* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940).

²³ Sartre, *Family Idiot*, 2:174.

²⁴ James Fernandez, *Bwiti: An Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) 215.

to Noah, for her evil-doing. Kawa was reinstated, and Noah submitted to an appendectomy and hernia operation under him, confident in the surgeon's skill now that he was free from his sister's baleful influence.

Can one explain the difference between Sewa and Noah? Sewa saw that one's salvation lay within, in one's ability to endure hardships, to do one's duty, to be worthy of one's father's example; Noah saw his salvation in external powers and miraculous transformations, and waited for a miracle to occur. Can such differences be satisfactorily explained sociologically, in terms of cultural norms? Can they be reduced to any one defining moment in a person's life, any one factor? I suspect that Kuranko might theorize this as a dialectic between town and bush—the first term covering the domain of commonplace sociality, received wisdom and normative morality—the second conjuring antinomian images of occult power, spiritual influence, and capricious emotions. While the town is the domain of secular power and chieftaincy, the bush is the domain of wild powers and supernatural mystery. Those that seek their fortunes in the wild are typically those whose avenues to power are blocked in the village— orphan children, junior co-wives, younger sons. Sewa and Noah thus embody a contrast that pervades Kuranko life. But I would hesitate to describe them simply as exemplars of a worldview whose parameters are fixed, for there have been so many factors involved in the shaping of their destinies—personal, cultural, historical, and contingent—that I consider the most interesting task as being one that tries to describe these lives in such ways as to disclose the curious alchemy that is at work in them, the conflicts that emerge, the struggle for existence that is always at stake. In this respect phenomenology shares with pragmatism an emphasis not on antecedent causes but on consequences and effects: what becomes of ideas, whatever their origins, cultural or historical, in the lives of those who struggle to create a worthwhile life with them and whatever else comes to hand. For this one needs detailed descriptions of life as lived, and the ways in which various concepts appear and disappear, combine and permute, within human lives—far more, perhaps, than one needs conceptual summaries, which cut into, arrest, and prioritize one moment of the whole in order to create the impression that one grasps its essence, and may name it.

■ The Struggle for Being

I have sketched here what I describe elsewhere as the “struggle for being”²⁵—the largely pre-reflective and amorphous desire, yearning or will to be present-in-the-world, not as an object that simply suffers the actions of others but as an acting subject whose existence is recognized by others, and makes a difference to their existence. But this will-to-be typically and successively fastens on *numerous* external objects, projects, and others—sometimes real and sometimes imagined—in

²⁵ Michael Jackson, *Existential Anthropology: Events, Exigencies and Effects* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

its unceasing and opportunistic search for a form of realization that takes one beyond oneself, into the world.

One of the most compelling anthropological accounts of this struggle for being is Michael Young's study of Kalauna narratives.²⁶ In Kalauna (Papua New Guinea), every lineage possesses its own corpus of myths (*neineya*), which are inherited and jealousy guarded by Kalauna male leaders. But what intrigues Michael Young is the way in which these myths enable their custodians to simultaneously express and legitimize both collective values *and* personal preoccupations. When Young first sat down with Iyahalina and asked for "the story" of his life, the old man spoke into the tape recorder for two hours without interruption. But on playing back this soliloquy Young discerned not a single autobiographic detail in what was seemingly a sequence of familiar myths, interspersed with details about Iyahalina's duties as a "ritual expert" (*toitavealata*). When Young teasingly took the old man to task for having recounted nothing of his childhood, marriage, or work experience abroad, Iyahalina grinned and said "Yes, like that," implying that the myths he had told and the events of his life were in effect one and the same,²⁷ for he clearly identified with the ancestral figures in the myths, and his own personal quest for legitimacy as the leader of his hamlet found precedent in their actions. Clearly, men like Iyahalina both *introject* the dramatic structure of the myth and *project* their personal preoccupations onto it. As Young puts it, "Men such as Iyahalina, who internalize their myths to a marked extent, such that they perceive their lives in terms of the idioms and ideals that the myths promote, *appear to submit to them while yet exerting their own purposes through them. They thereby unwittingly modify their myths quite subtly in the process.*"²⁸

While Kalauna men articulate their biographies in myth, the Kodi of Sumba (Eastern Indonesia) give oblique expression to their biographies through valued personal possessions, often a container such as a betel pouch, a hollow drum, a porcelain vessel, a funeral shroud. Moreover, subjects that may not be spoken of publicly—such as sexual politics—will often find oblique expression in the accounts people give of objects. Writes Janet Hoskins: "A young girl I knew well never confessed her feelings of romantic longing and later disappointment to me directly, but she was fascinated by the story of a magic spindle that flew through the air to snare a beloved. When later her own hopes were cut off, she sent a message to her lost lover through the secret gift of the object. A famous singer and healer who also wanted a female companion composed long ballads to his drum, introducing each ritual session with a history of efforts to cover the drum properly so it could be pierced by a male voice and travel up to the heavens. . . . Another man, famed as a storyteller and bard, said he received his "gift of words" in the simple, woven

²⁶ Michael Young, *Magicians of Manumanua: Living Myth in Kalauna* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 177–78.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 19 [emphasis added].

betel bag he carried with him at all times.”²⁹ That objects are surrogates for people, metaphors for social relationships, and serve as objective correlatives of subjective moods and states, may, Hoskins suggests, have a lot to do with the fact that in Kodi ritual life, objects often substitute for persons. Thus, in life-crisis rituals, a spindle or knife can substitute for a man, a cotton board or gold pendant can take the place of a woman, and a betel bag be buried in lieu of a person.

As in Kalauna, people do not tell life-stories or autobiographies explicitly or directly. They tell them obliquely through “public commodities” such as myths, everyday objects, and even animals. Thus, a woman—a second wife “who had to live many of her days in the shadow of an accomplished and well-established first wife” and, unlike the senior wife, had produced no male child—expressed her resentment through a “fable of protest” in which the female protagonist is identified with a water buffalo—i.e., an animal that is abused, mute, and subjugated.³⁰

It is, however, important to note that though Janet Hoskins and Michael Young bring to light a dynamic interplay between “public commodities” and individual lives, Kalauna, Kodi and, indeed, Kuranko typically play down the role of the individual in shaping his or her own destiny, and disavow the very notion of autobiography. In other words, it is our Eurocentric bias that leads us to foreground and publicize what is, in the cultures we study, often kept in the background and unspoken. But the aim of anthropology is not to represent the other solely from his or her own point of view, but rather to problematize all points of view, including the ethnographer’s, and show that every dominant leitmotif in any culture coexists with sub-dominant themes that, on certain occasions, or in certain persons, come into focus. The significance of ethnographic biography thus lies in its ability to explore the contexts in which personal lives are mythologized, and mythologies take on the lineaments of personal experience.

■ Writing Ethnographic Biography

“In writing an ethnographic biography,” notes Michael Herzfeld, referring to his “Portrait” of the Cretan-born Greek novelist, Andreas Nenedakis, “I hope to balance the advantages of the usual anthropological focus on collective phenomena against the complicating presence of an individual who is himself engaged in exploring issues, conjunctures, and places that have interested anthropologists, as well as many phenomena that have hitherto seemed beyond their locally focused perspective.”³¹ But having recourse to narrative, to contextualization, and to radical empiricism to flesh out and make vivid the encounters, events, and detail of a life is not a pretext for invention; rather, it is encouragement to make our accounts of the lives of others do justice to their reality, what is at stake for them, as well as

²⁹ Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People’s Lives* (New York: Routledge, 1998) 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, ch. 3.

³¹ Herzfeld, *Portrait*, 15.

render those lives readable. Many experienced ethnographers share with novelists a strong sense of the unpredictable, complicated, often incoherent character of a life, as well as its indeterminate relationship with cultural patternings and ideals. Something of this vision is captured under the rubric “life course studies,”³² though, sadly, many of these studies lack the verisimilitude that I regard as a primary measure of discursive integrity.

Rather than trace the developmental cycle of allegedly typical lives, or focus wholly on life crisis rituals, the ostensive aim of life course analysis is to encompass the entire course of individual lives, exploring the diverse experiences (everyday as well as critical, sacred as well as mundane), the various social environments (both local and extralocal) and the many significant others (precursors and successors; contemporaries and consociates) that shape any biography, so disclosing the interweave of the conventional and the contingent, the shared and the idiosyncratic, the practical and the ideological in human lives. I take it as axiomatic that human relationships cannot be reduced to the terms that are conventionally ascribed to them but depend on what happens in *the course of a relationship over time, and how this reflects changing external circumstances and variable subjective capacities*. In other words, rather than simply identify the general conditions governing the possibility of a particular human relationship, or risk reducing the complexities of lived relationships to determinate causes, cultural rules, or classificatory categories, one seeks to explore the experiences that transpire in the transitional spaces of intersubjectivity—experiences that often confound our formal descriptions and overflow our conceptual frameworks.

Inevitably this broaches the question as to how one understands the relationship between objective and subjective models of truth. Whereas the classical empiricist approaches human bonds with an eye to underlying patterns and explanatory principles, the radical empiricist shares with the creative writer a fascination for the mysterious, emergent, and conflicted character of all human relationships. Consider classical dilemma tales of Africa, for instance, where moral, intellectual or legal clarity is defied by the impossible situations in which people so often find themselves thrown. Your canoe capsizes in the middle of a wide river, and your mother, your daughter, your sister, your wife, and your mother-in-law find themselves floundering in the deep water and swift current. It is physically impossible for you to rescue more than one of these drowning women, all of whom you are duty-bound to respect, and on whom your own life in one way or another depends. What do you

³² For anthropological treatments of the life course, see Vincent Crapanzano, “Life Histories,” *American Anthropologist* 86 (1984) 953–60. Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, “On the Limits of Life Stages in Ethnography: Toward a Theory of Vital Conjunctions,” *American Anthropologist* 104 (2002) 865–80. For sociological surveys of the subject, see Jenny Hockey and Allison James, *Social Identities Across the Life Course* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) or Stephen Hunt, *The Life Course: A Sociological Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

do?³³ The call is not for fixed or final answers and, in any case, one can invoke no hierarchy of values that implies that the life of one of these individuals can be set unequivocally above the others. The point of the riddle is to provoke palaver, to provide an opportunity for people to discuss and debate the impossible quandaries of existence, and to foster an acceptance of multiple points of view as the only way of coping with life's bewildering contingencies and double-binds. Here, we can find no consolation in notions of adaptive advantage, rational choice, or moral codifications of what is right or wrong; life confounds reason and is refractory to explanation. At most one can say, "God only knows," and accept the limits of what any human being may know, do, or endure.

Mindful of the sceptical tenor of these African tales, I want to resist explaining away the indeterminate relationship that seems to exist, on the one hand, between the conditions that frame our fate, set our course and determine our identity and, on the other, the unforeseen events, adventitious encounters and improbable developments that characterize the course of an actual life. As the writer A. M. Homes understates it, "I have often felt the difference between who I arrived as and who I've become."³⁴ This difference may be especially difficult to come to terms with if one was adopted, and denied any knowledge of, or any relationship with, one's birth parents, for in such cases one remains in the dark about who one "arrived as," and fills the void with excessive imaginings that cannot be tested against any reality. If one has a chance of doing so, as A. M. Homes did, and as many of Australia's "stolen" Aboriginal children did, years after the original separation, the gap between what one has imagined and what one actually encounters may be impossible to cross. Of her first meeting with her biological mother, A. M. Homes writes, "I am not who I thought I was, and neither is she the queen of queens that I imagined."³⁵ These are mysteries: how a shadowy, unrealized, or imagined relationship can hold a person in thrall, eclipsing the relationship he or she is presently involved in; how our relationship with ourselves blurs into relationships with significant others; how what is given, in biology or by fate, connects with what we become, by dint of experiences undergone, vicissitudes weathered, situations encountered, crises worked through, and, above, all experiences dreamt, fantasized, and imagined. Such existential situations simply cannot be reduced or referred to evolutionary struggles or single issues—of mating, finding food, defending territory, lighting the darkness.

³³ William R. Bascom cites Kono, Bete, Lamba, Ila and Dyula examples in *African Dilemma Tales* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975) 93–94.

³⁴ A. M. Homes, *The Mistress's Daughter: A Memoir* (New York: Viking, 2007) 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

■ On Romantic Science

A. R. Luria's work exemplifies the ethnographic phenomenology that I sought to exemplify in my own work. Like his teacher and mentor, Lev Vygotsky, and his disciple, Oliver Sacks, Luria's approach to neuropsychology was informed by the conviction "that even the most elemental functions of brain and mind were not wholly biological in nature but conditioned by the experiences, the interactions, the culture, of the individual."³⁶ Luria's view that "human faculties could not be studied or understood in isolation, but always had to be understood in relation *to living and formative influences*,"³⁷ is echoed by many physicians who readily speak of medicine as both a science and an art, demanding of the practitioner biomedical competency as well as an attentiveness to the subjectivity of the patient and his or her narrative experience³⁸ and a recognition that healing is as much an outcome of care, trust and cooperation as it is of pharmacological interventions and surgical procedures. Luria also invokes Goethe's view that theory is gray, whereas the tree of life is green, in outlining what he calls a "romantic science" that refuses to reduce the "wealth of living reality" to "abstract models that lose the properties of the phenomena themselves."³⁹ In his case studies of the "mind of a mnemonist" and a "man with a shattered world" Luria describes in compelling detail what it was for these men—the first afflicted, like Borges's Funes "the Memorious," with an inability to forget; the second oppressed by an inability to remember—to live within the limits of their social and psychological situations. Instead of reducing Zazetsky to his brain injury, Luria reveals Zazetsky's dynamic *relationship* with his condition over time, his struggle to make good what he had lost. Re-reading this remarkable book recalls, for me, a section in my mother's journals headed "My Life with Arthritis" in which she refers to her "illness" as "my ever constant companion for over fifty years." Like Zazetsky, my mother's humanity consists in what she made of what she had been made⁴⁰ and brings home to me the extent to which all human beings, in all societies, experience existence as a struggle between limitations and expectations. This existential view has a methodological corollary, succinctly captured in Niels Bohr's *Abtötungsprinzip*, which warns against destroying the subject of our investigations through the techniques with which we carry them out, as well as an epistemological corollary, best articulated in the phenomenological view that the truths we live by and the truths with which

³⁶ Oliver Sacks, foreword to *The Man With a Shattered World: The History of a Brain Wound*, by A. R. Luria (trans. Lynn Solotaroff; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) viii.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, viii. (emphasis added).

³⁸ Arthur Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

³⁹ Cited in Sacks, "Foreword," x.

⁴⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr* (trans. Bernard Frechtman; New York: George Braziller, 1963) 49.

life may be explained are seldom congruent, and that the latter should not be used to subvert the former or vice versa.

We come here to the limits of social science. To understand in depth and detail what transpires within intersubjectivity we draw upon work by social scientists, psychologists and ethologists to be sure, but it is to the work of artists, fiction writers, and biographers that we turn for techniques that help us do greatest justice to lived experience. In venturing beyond the borders of orthodox science, we may be accused of departing from empirical truth or worse, of pure invention and wild surmise. But there may be a middle ground, where anecdote and biography enrich rather than invalidate our work.

Let me elaborate by referring to a largely forgotten essay by Lionel Trilling, introducing a 1952 American edition of George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*. Trilling begins by observing how rare it is that a writer's personal identity is fully acknowledged or fully felt in his or her writing. Indeed, both literature and science tend, conventionally, to background or occlude the author's own biography in order to give his or her characters, concepts and conclusions greater presence and weight. But like Mark Twain and William James, Orwell "presides" over his work, eschewing any false authority and focusing on "fronting the world with nothing more than one's simple, direct, undeceived intelligence, and respect for the powers one does not have, and the work one undertakes to do."⁴¹ Trilling goes on to speak against an etherealizing tradition, dating from the enlightenment, that privileges abstract, rational thought over the commonplace bodily, emotional, and mental realities of our everyday lives. There are overtones of John Dewey's empirical naturalism and Bakhtin's grotesque realism in Trilling's argument against reification.

The prototypical act of the modern intellectual is his abstracting himself from the life of the family. We have yet to understand the thaumaturgical way in which we conceive of intellectuality. By intellectuality we are freed from the thralldom to the familiar commonplace, from the materiality and concreteness by which it exists, the hardness of the cash and the hardness of getting it, the inelegance and intractability of family things. It gives us power over intangibles, such as Beauty and Justice, and it permits us to escape the cosmic ridicule which in our youth we suppose is inevitably directed at those who take seriously the small concerns of the world, which we know to be inadequate and doomed by the very fact that it is so absurdly conditioned—by things, habits, local and temporary customs, and the foolish errors and solemn absurdities of the men of the past.⁴²

Inevitably, a mode of address that remains faithful to the facts of experience—pedestrian, unsystematic, ill-focused, and inchoate though they often are—resists the intellectual's demand for analytical coherence and the conventional expectation of

⁴¹ Lionel Trilling, introduction to *Homage to Catalonia*, by George Orwell (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1952) xi–x.

⁴² *Ibid.*, xvi.

narrative closure. In this risky endeavour, I take consolation from Herman Melville's *Billy Budd*, which I re-read after a trip from Boston to New Bedford with an old friend from Denmark, Hans Lucht, who shared my admiration of Melville.

It was a late winter day, the streets deserted, a cold wind off the sea, not unlike the day that Ishmael entered the Whaleman's Chapel (the Seamen's Bethel) and heard Father Mapple's sermon on Jonah. When we failed to find a door into the chapel, and after peering through windows into the gloomy and ghostly interior, Hans and I crossed the street to the Whaling Museum where we were the only visitors. We spent several hours there, separately meditating on the seamen's paraphernalia, the reconstructed fo'c'sle, the photographs and scrimshaw work that enabled one to piece together a picture of the lives of whalers in mid-nineteenth century New England, and their relationship with the sea.

The following lines from *Billy Budd* had special relevance to me:

The symmetry of form attainable in pure fiction cannot so readily be achieved in a narration essentially having less to do with fable than with fact. Truth uncompromisingly told will always have its ragged edges; hence the conclusion of such a narrative is apt to be less finished than an architectural finial.⁴³

Melville's ambiguous, inconsistent, chameleon-like characters, his concern with the instability of trust and identity, and his "quarrel with fiction"⁴⁴ are all in evidence in *The Confidence-Man*⁴⁵ where he describes the paradoxical nature of truth in these words:

That fiction, where every character can, by reason of its consistency, be comprehended at a glance, either exhibits but sections of character, making them appear for wholes, or else is very untrue to reality; while, on the other hand, that author who draws a character, even though to common view incongruous in its parts, as the flying-squirrel, and, at different periods, as much at variance with itself as the caterpillar is with the butterfly into which it changes, may yet, in so doing, be not false but faithful to the facts.⁴⁶

If nature is replete with incongruities, who can fault a writer for creating incongruous characters? Human nature is as various and full of contradictions as

⁴³ Herman Melville, *Billy Budd and Other Stories* (Hertfordshire, U.K.: Wordsworth Editions, 1998) 296.

⁴⁴ The title of Nina Baym's renowned essay, "Melville's Quarrel with Fiction," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 94 (1979) 909–23.

⁴⁵ The term was coined by the New York Herald in 1849 to describe the activities of a certain "William Hudson" and later became associated with the showman P. T. Barnum, whose signature phrase "there's a sucker born every minute" was in fact put into circulation by one George Hull who unearthed a fake giant near Cardiff, New York in 1859 and made a small fortune from the thousands, who flocked to see it.

⁴⁶ Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 84–85.

the natural world itself.⁴⁷ But is Melville seeking to justify the liberties he took with the “facts” of his youthful voyages in the South Seas? Or do his reflections on the inconsistency of character spring from a struggle to bring together two seemingly antithetical notions of truth, the first respecting “objective” fact, the second respecting the way the world appears to a person, regardless of how absurd and ill-informed this may seem to others? *Moby Dick* juxtaposes treatises on cetology with sermons, short stories, and metaphysical speculations as though no single voice, no one genre could do justice to the complexity and inconclusiveness of Melville’s theme. By locating oneself in this borderland between conventional certainties and vigorous innovation, a writer may be taken to task for playing fast and loose with the facts—as Melville was—when, in fact, truth itself is mercurial in this domain where what rings true to experience or works in practice may be scientifically unproven, and what is empirically true falls short of what we need to believe if we are to live.

■ Coda

One evening, on my last visit to Sierra Leone, I wandered along Freetown’s Lumley beach at low tide, my bare feet on the hard, ribbed sand, recalling an experimental art work that I had seen in New Zealand some years ago. The artist had taken a series of photographs that documented the same stretch of beach sand at low tide at the same time over a period of thirty days. What this series of snapshots revealed was that no two tides were ever the same. Although we have the impression that a beach is a beach is a beach, the ribbed patterns, interlacings, and shallow depressions that the ebbing tide leaves behind are always slightly different. You simply need to be curious, and to have a means of satisfying your curiosity, to bring this phenomenon to light. And I also thought of something Leslie White wrote many years ago about Pueblo biographies: “the autobiography of a Pueblo Indian is about as personal as the life history of an automobile tire.”⁴⁸ For when I was doing fieldwork in Central Australia it was borne home to me day after day, as Warlpiri tracked the imprint of tires on dusty desert roads with the same assiduousness that they tracked human footprints, that though all tires appear alike to the unobservant eye, each has an idiosyncratic tread and unique pattern of wear and tear that make it readily identifiable as belonging *to a particular vehicle, a particular person*.

⁴⁷ When writing *The Confidence Man*, Melville may have had Montaigne’s observations in mind: “We are all framed of flaps and patches and of so shapelesse and diverse a contexture, that every peece and every moment playeth his part. And there is as much difference found betweene us and our selves, as there is between our selves and other.” (Michel de Montaigne, *The Essayes of Montaigne* [trans. John Florio; New York: Modern Library, 1948] 298). Certainly, in *Billy Budd*, Melville reveals a debt to Montaigne as a writer skilled in “treating actual men and events . . . free from cant and convention” and able to “philosophize upon realities” (ibid., 244).

⁴⁸ Leslie White, “Autobiography of an Acoma Indian,” in *New Material from Acoma* (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 136; Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1943) 301–59.

Between Logocentrism and Lococentrism: *Alambrista* Challenges to Traditional Theology*

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“*Olhe, um terrorista!*” yelled the construction worker as I passed. I was living in Salvador, Brazil, where eighty percent of the population identifies as something other than white. Though not sharing the same ancestry as my neighbors, I never, as a *moreno* (brown-skinned person), stood out to them as different. Yet to the man who pointed me out that day, I did. He apparently had been watching the news: another round of Arab men arrested on suspicion of plotting a terror attack. It was a small moment, an aberration amidst the abundance of hospitality I was enjoying in a country not my own. Born in Sri Lanka and raised in the United States, I chose to move to Brazil mainly for personal enrichment—to study and practice liberation theology in a land regarded as one of its homes. With so varied and privileged a background, I saw myself as something of a supra-cultural globetrotter, immune to other peoples’ limitations of cultural and national identity. Whenever crossing what others referred to as borders, I rarely ceased to feel centered. Yet that day—the day I was labeled a terrorist—I suffered something of the migrant’s anguish, the de-centering humiliation that typically accompanies the border crosser.

The *alambrista*’s anguish is far more devastating and far more regular an occurrence. “*Look, an illegal!*”¹ In the United States, undocumented immigrants

* I first presented an early draft of this paper in October 2007, in a seminar course titled “Borderlands,” taught by Michael Jackson and David Carrasco at Harvard Divinity School. I wish to thank to them and seminar colleagues for their helpful feedback.

¹ The Spanish word *alambrista* comes from the stem *alambre*, which means “wire.” *Alambrista*, therefore, connotes a high-wire walker, but it also carries the same pejorative force as the label, “illegal.” For an extended discussion on the nuances of its meaning, see Cordelia Candelaria, “Tightrope Walking the Border: *Alambrista* and the Acrobatics of Mestizo Representation,” *Alambrista and the*

from south of the U.S.-Mexico border live and die in fear of that utterance. Their experiences of hardship and exploitation are movingly portrayed in the documentary film, *Alambrista: The Director's Cut*. Produced by David Carrasco and released in 2002, the director's cut is a modified re-release of the original 1977 production by Robert M. Young. In the twenty-five intervening years, the film's message has only gained in relevance, with "the immigration issue" today as potent and polarizing in U.S. public discourse as it ever has been.

Besides its timeliness, the re-release benefits most from its entirely re-scored soundtrack, composed, arranged and primarily performed by José Cuellar. Recently, when Carrasco invited Cuellar to speak with his students at Harvard, he introduced his guest by his stage name: Dr. Loco—*loco* being the Spanish word for "crazy." Carrasco provocatively quipped, "We've heard a great deal about logocentrism. Well, here we have a case of *lococentrism*."

It is this provocation that inspired this paper.²

Indeed, what would happen if *lococentrism* were to confront the logocentric thrust of Western intellectual history? More particularly, what implications might the *loco* have for traditional theology?³ With references to poststructuralist and postcolonial thinkers, the *Alambrista* film and soundtrack, and select U.S. Hispanic theologians, I argue in this paper that the concept of the *logos* has limited value in accessing and assessing religious experiences and theological expressions along the U.S.-Mexico borderland. The *logos* (especially its associations with purity and textuality) should be balanced by the *loco*, with its accents on hybridity (*mestizaje*) and orality. It is precisely the possibility of the marginal Latino⁴ *loco* de-centering

U.S.-Mexico Border: Film, Music, and Stories of Undocumented Immigrants (ed. Nicholas J. Cull and David Carrasco; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004) 137–50.

² Carrasco himself, together with Roberto Lint Sagarena, present their neologism, *lococentrism*, as a challenge to Western logocentrism in their recently-published, "The Religious Vision of Gloria Anzaldúa: *Borderlands/La Frontera* as a Shamanic Space," *Mexican American Religions: Spirituality, Activism, and Culture* (ed. Gaston Espinosa and Mario T. Garcia; Duke University Press, 2008) 223–41. The essay offers an insightful comparison of José Cuellar and Gloria Anzaldúa, author of *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

³ I mean "traditional" here in the same sense that David Tracy uses the word *traditional* to describe the "Greco-Christian alliance" that unites Christian theology and Western or Greek logocentrism. According to Tracy, the "traditional Greco-Christian alliance on the centrality of Word-as-presence and divine self-manifestation . . . helped to occasion such hierarchically paired Western religious and cultural categories as spirit over letter, ideality over materiality, reason over feeling, content in written sign over form, signified over signifier, identity over difference, and self-presence in self-understanding over all 'derivative,' distancing forms of writing." From that list of hierarchical pairings, I limit my description of "traditional theology" in this paper to two: "identity over difference" (purity) and "content in written sign over form" (textuality). See David Tracy, "Writing," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (ed. Mark C. Taylor; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998) 385.

⁴ Latino, not Latin. It should be emphasized that it is in terms of its Spanish-language referent, *loco*, and not the Latin *locus* ("place"), that I follow Carrasco and Sagarena in theorizing *lococentrism*. *Lococentrism* as used here should therefore not be confused with Edward S. Casey's coinage in, "Embracing Lococentrism: A Response to Thomas Brockelman's Critique," in *Human Studies* 19

the hegemonic Greek *logos* that will keep theology relevant in an age in which, Edward Said writes, “the huge waves of migrants, expatriates, and refugees . . . have become the single most important human reality of our time the world over.”⁵

■ Logocentric Purity vs. *Alambrista Mestijaze*

Challenges to Logocentric Purity

The centrality of *logos* (i.e., “reason,” “word” or “rational principle”) to the Christian tradition owes to Christianity’s emergence in the bosom of Hellenistic culture. The most sustained meaning of *logos* in Hellenistic thought, particularly that of Heraclitus and the Stoics, is that of a “unity behind plurality,” the universal ordering principle and law that is as applicable to the cosmos as it is to humans.⁶ The root *leg-*, from which *logos* derives, means among other things, “to gather”; i.e., “to pick out things which from some standpoint are alike.”⁷ It is precisely this emphasis on ultimate identity, on sameness or unity notwithstanding the possibility of penultimate differentiation, that has carried significant weight in the development of both philosophy and theology in the West.

Jacques Derrida calls attention to and criticizes the predominance of this and other aspects of the *logos* in Western philosophy, labeling the phenomenon *logocentrism*. *On Grammatology* is his challenge to those semiotic theories of language that posit a final unity between signifier and signified. Such a unity assumes a transcendental signified that escapes the perpetual “play of signifying references.”⁸ This assumption carries no legitimacy outside of “onto-theology, the metaphysics of presence and logocentrism,”⁹ the mode of thought that Derrida rejects. The search for an anchor or the attempted escape to a transcendental signified is the baseless nostalgia for a final, stable unity underling plurality. Derrida’s rejection of this

(1996). Uncannily, perhaps, an engagement with the Latin root and, equally, Casey’s phenomenology of place and space, could easily contribute critiques of logocentric theology complementary to those I develop in this paper. A *lococentric* theology, in this case, would be a place-centered, local or contextual theology along the lines developed by Robert J. Schreiter in his classic *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1985). To my knowledge, no contextual theologian has yet seized on the concept of *lococentrism*—in the Latin sense—to challenge the universalistic pretensions of logocentric theology. My use of *lococentrism*—limited in this paper to the Spanish sense—aims to contribute to precisely such a challenge.

⁵ Edward W. Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) 47.

⁶ Karsten Friis Johansen, “*Logos*,” in *Encyclopedia of Classical Philosophy* (ed. Donald J. Zeyl; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997) 304–7.

⁷ A. Debrunner, “The Words λέγω, λόγος, ῥῆμα, λαλέω in the Greek World,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. Gerhard Kittel; trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1967) 4:72.

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

logos principle is rooted in and opens up to a concern for *difference* and *deference* (of final and fixed meaning), two meanings of the French *différer* that combine to form Derrida's neologism, *différance*. For Derrida the epoch of the metaphysics of presence is over. Logocentrism must concede to *différance*.

In ways that illustrate his own similar distaste for final, pure totalities, Michel Foucault (in *Madness and Civilization*) interrogates the conditions for the possibility of psychiatry as a discipline and madness as its object of inquiry.¹⁰ Such an analysis, common to his early "archaeological" phase, advances his concern that critical scholarship serve as "an insurrection of subjugated knowledges."¹¹ Subjugated knowledges are deviant discourses. They may have once held a certain status but have since become masked and disqualified. Prior to modernity, for example, the knowledge of the madman did not warrant containment and/or banishment. Madness was not always regarded as a disease or illness. At times, it was even seen as benign and divinely revelatory. This illustrates that there was nothing logical or inevitable about its eventual disqualification in the modern epoch. Historical contingencies, not metaphysical necessities, disqualified madness, locating it "low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity."¹² The consequent role of the critical historian is to recognize and insurrect such oppositional discourses: "[I]t is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work."¹³ The mad—the *loco*—cannot remain forever contained and subordinate. As does Derrida, Foucault contends that the fixity of the logocentric needs to be disrupted by the dynamism of the *lococentric*.¹⁴

Postcolonial theorists like Homi Bhabha and Edward Said extend the works of the French poststructuralists beyond their unacknowledged Eurocentric parochialisms. Bhabha holds that merely celebrating the fragment is insufficient without an

awareness that the epistemological "limits" of those ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident histories and voices—women, the colonized, minority groups, the bearers of

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (trans. Richard Howard; New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

¹¹ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (ed. Colin Gordon; New York: Pantheon Books, 1972) 81.

¹² *Ibid.*, 82.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ In connecting Foucault and Derrida, I should note their severe disagreement over the very question of madness. In short, Derrida critiques Foucault for failing to explicate the impossibility of analyzing madness within the logocentric bounds of philosophy. Derrida here demonstrates that his concern with the madness of philosophy goes further than Foucault's more limited concern with the philosophy of madness. Nevertheless, the two appear to share an underlying agreement on the fundamental point that I am emphasizing: opposition to pure, absolute and logocentric totalities that efface rather than promote alterity and ambiguity. For more on the debate, see Shoshana Felman, "Madness and Philosophy or Literature's Reason," *Yale French Studies* 52 (1975) 206–28.

policed sexualities. . . . It is in this sense that the boundary becomes the place from which *something begins its presencing*.¹⁵

The margins are not merely the limits of rational discourse; they also mark the enunciative “location of culture.” For Bhabha that site is necessarily hybrid. Unity and homogeneity, propagated from whatever camp, are epistemologically and politically inadequate insofar as they homogenize and distort by assuming artificial and totalized bifurcations.¹⁶ The “hybrid moment” calls for “the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the One . . . nor the Other . . . but something else besides*, which contests the terms and territories of both.”¹⁷ Contestation and contradiction need not be sublimated into a higher and purer unity. Moreover, the liminal space in which the colonized are forced to assimilate but never fully do (i.e., the slippage between the signifier and the signified) becomes the site of subtle forms of resistance, including forms of colonial resistance that generally did not concern the poststructuralists.

Along the same lines of Bhabha’s critique, Said, in one of his last published books, highlights the irreducible hybridity of cultures. What makes cultures and civilizations interesting, he writes, is “not their essence of purity, but their combinations and diversity, their countercurrents, the way that they have had of conducting a compelling dialogue with other civilizations.”¹⁸ This is a productive multiplicity that remains ever in motion, refusing resolution, embracing tension, and remaining “open to the presence and the challenges of the emergent, the insurgent, the unrequited and the unexplored.”¹⁹ Emphasizing difference and deviance in this way, both Bhabha and Said carry forward Derrida’s and Foucault’s opposition to logocentrism, bringing it to bear on the experiences of formerly colonized peoples. All of these theorists challenge the hegemony of the *logos* in Western intellectual history, particularly its homogenizing, totalizing tendencies. They affirm differentiation over unification. They insurrect the subjugated knowledges of madness, the disqualified hybridity of the *loco*.

Alambrista and the Mestizaje of U.S. Hispanic Theology

If the *loco*, in contrast with the *logos*, can be characterized by its multiplicities and heterogeneities, then José Cuellar has earned the honor of his stage name, Dr. Loco, through his musical contribution to *Alambrista*. The plurality of musical styles, instruments and languages in the film’s soundtrack is arguably the most enriching modification of the director’s cut over the original release. In “*Notas en el Viento: The Musical Soundtrack of Alambrista: Director’s Cut*,” Cuellar writes of his “language-mixing and genre-merging approaches to music generally, and to

¹⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994) 4–5

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁸ Said, *Humanism*, 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

US-Mexican borderlands music particularly.”²⁰ In the course of the ninety-minute film, the viewer enjoys a wide array of musical styles from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border: blues, salsa, funk, *ranchera*, country western, funk, *corrido*, and others. Yet even more striking is Cuellar’s penchant for bringing them together within a single piece, allowing them to play off of and enhance one another.

Such fusions are never purposeless. Cuellar employs them to accentuate themes and develop the plot. Take, for example, an early scene in which the main character Roberto, an undocumented Mexican immigrant in search of work and income in the U.S., encounters the working-class family of “Okies” facing their own set of migratory travails. Despite the language barrier and cultural differences, Roberto and the Okies discover opportunities to help one another. About the song that he composed for the scene, “The Okie-Dokie Shuffle,” Cuellar writes:

This seemed to be the perfect film moment for a musical transculturation bringing together the *mojados* or “wetbacks” and the gringos or ‘okies.’ Toward this end, we combined Joe Goldmark’s “San Francisco country” steel guitar solo along with my norteno-style accordion to instrumentally represent the musical merging of the Anglo and Mexican American traditions along the US-Mexican border.²¹

The conjoining of the steel guitar and the accordion, in this song and others, enables Cuellar to illustrate musically the hybridity, the uncommon and unexpected merging of personalities and cultures that is distinctive of this scene and the borderland experience in general. At another point in the story, Roberto finds human affection in the arms of Sharon (a white American woman), and the two overcome their language barrier enough to be able to share themselves emotionally and physically. The lyrics of the song in this scene are bilingual, as is their intimacy, serving once again to illustrate musically that the heterogeneity of the borderlands is a positive force, enabling community, solidarity and mutual enrichment.²²

In U.S. Hispanic theology, the term for the borderland hybridities that Cuellar’s music illustrates is the Spanish word *mestizaje*. In *The Future Is Mestizo*, Mexican-American theologian and priest Virgilio Elizondo defines *mestizaje* as “the process through which two totally different peoples mix biologically and culturally so that a new people begins to emerge.”²³ Mexican-Americans living on the borderland

²⁰ José B. Cuellar, “Notas en el Viento: The Musical Soundtrack of *Alambrista*: The Director’s Cut,” *Alambrista and the U.S.-Mexico Border: Film, Music, and Stories of Undocumented Immigrants* (ed. Nicholas J. Cull and David Carrasco; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004) 178.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 188–89.

²² *Ibid.*, 190–92.

²³ Virgilio Elizondo, *The Future Is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet* (rev. ed.; Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000) 17n. Owing in large measure to the influence of Elizondo, the concept of *mestizaje* is perhaps the defining feature of U.S. Hispanic (also called Latino/a) theology, distinguishing it from Latin American liberation theology with which it otherwise shares much in common. For more on the significance of the concept, see essays by Jacques Audinet, Roberto S. Goizueta and Virgilio Elizondo in “Part Three: *Mestizaje* and a Galilean Christology,” *Beyond*

underwent the process of being made “twice mesticized”: first, with the Spanish conquest of Mexico; and second, with the United States’s conquest and annexation of northern Mexico.²⁴ While taking care not to romanticize the notion — “there [is] a painful side, for it is difficult to always be different”²⁵ — Elizondo confidently expresses throughout his book the faith that “a new human group is in the making,”²⁶ and the *mestizo* is leading the way.

What feeds such optimism is also that which gives *mestizaje* its theological, in addition to its cultural and biological, inflection. In concert with liberation theology’s assertion of God’s preferential option for the poor, Elizondo understands God to be particularly present among people on the margins, in the borderlands. To illustrate this he examines the significance of Jesus’ sociocultural identity as a Galilean Jew. That *mestizo* identity (Jewish and Galilean) gave Jesus the same “inside-outsider” ambiguity of Mexican-Americans in the United States today. Elizondo contends, “As the Jews in Galilee were too Jewish to be accepted by the gentile population and too contaminated with pagan ways to be accepted by the pure-minded Jews of Jerusalem, so have the Mexican-Americans in the Southwest been rejected by two groups.”²⁷ The dominant culture’s standards of purity (and its assumption of mutually exclusive identities) marked Jesus off as a “half-breed.” Although the Christian tradition that developed tends to discard this historical fact (perhaps to warrant its own claims to purity), Jesus himself was judged by the norms of his society to be impure. As if that were not enough, Jesus’ decision to accompany the prostitutes, tax collectors and other social outcasts cements his position as “the antithesis of all human quests for ‘purity.’”²⁸

The implications of this historical attentiveness to Jesus are compelling. Elizondo writes that, as exemplified in Jesus, “[t]he *mestizo* is the biblical stone, rejected by the builders of this world, that God has chosen to be the cornerstone of a new creation, not chosen for honor and privilege, but for a sacred mission.”²⁹ God came to earth as a human being, but not just any human being. God came as a border-shattering *mestizo*, objectionable to the purity-maintaining border patrol of his day. For Elizondo, this illustrates that “[i]n a privileged way, God is present in the marginated, for distance from the powers of the world is closeness to God. It is consistently in the borderlands regions of human belonging that God begins the

Borders: Writings of Virgilio Elizondo and Friends (ed. Timothy Matovina; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000) 141–86.

²⁴ Elizondo, *Future*, 39–40.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

new creation.”³⁰ Far from being the location of chaotic impurities, the borderlands are recuperated as the site of divine privilege and renewal.

This has significant implications for Christian theology. In her critical extension of U.S. Hispanic theology to account for the particular experiences of Latinas, Ada María Isasi-Díaz writes that “[i]n *mujerista* theology difference, then, means not otherness or exclusive opposition but specificity and heterogeneity.”³¹ Difference is to be embraced, not opposed, policed or excluded as absolute otherness. She goes on: “But traditional theology is not willing to do that because instead of risking ambiguity[,] it rests secure in its impermeable and immutable center.”³² That center is the *logos*. *Mestizaje* unsettles the notion that *logos*—ahistorical, pure and undifferentiated oneness—is the appropriate center for Christian theology. Jesus Christ, as the *logos* and Son of God, was also a Galilean Jew. He thus embodied all the ambiguities and contradictions that caused the dominant culture of his time, like that of today, to dismiss *mestizos* as impure, as unreasonable, as illogical, as *loco*. Also in contrast to the dominant culture, Cuellar’s (Dr. Loco’s) soundtrack to *Alambrista* makes clear that the *loco* is the enriched and enriching site of cultural mixing and merging. Just as Derrida heralded the end of the logocentric epoch in Western metaphysics, here we have the parallel case of U.S. Hispanic theologians, together with artists like Cuellar, heralding the end of the logocentric epoch in theology. The past may have made claims to an undifferentiated purity, but the future is definitely *mestizo*.

■ Logocentric Textuality vs. *Alambrista* Theopoetics

Challenges to Logocentric Textuality

The fact that *Alambrista* illustrates the limits of logocentrism not primarily through writing but through film and music invites reflection on the relationship between the *logos* and aesthetics.³³ In his contribution to a collection of essays honoring Edward Said following his death, Homi Bhabha notes, “Polyphony and contrapuntality are among Said’s most commonly used poetic and political metaphors to describe the procedures of philological reception and resistance: ‘And so multiple identity, the polyphony of many voices playing off against each other, without, as I say, the need to reconcile them, just to hold them together, is what my work is all about.’”³⁴ Both

³⁰ Virgilio Elizondo, “Mestizaje as a Locus of Theological Reflection,” *Beyond Borders: Writings of Virgilio Elizondo and Friends* (ed. Timothy Matovina; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000) 173.

³¹ Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996) 81.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ The valuable textual anthology of critical and scholarly essays to which this paper refers extensively (*Alambrista and the U.S.-Mexico Border: Film, Music, and Stories of Undocumented Immigrants*) is secondary to and derivative from the film itself.

³⁴ Homi Bhabha, “Adagio,” *Edward Said: Continuing the Conversation* (ed. Homi Bhabha and W.J.T. Mitchell; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) 15–16.

polyphony and counterpoint are musical metaphors, probably derived from Said's background as a concert pianist. Might Said's connection of musical counterpoint and the contrapuntal dynamics of hybridity, multiplicity and *lococentrism* reveal something about the relationship between music (or nontextual aesthetics generally) and the *loco*? I believe it does, once again displaying the limits of logocentrism in terms not only of its totalizing homogeneity, but also of its excessive textuality.³⁵

Theological and religious studies in the academy have long operated with a persistent and pervasive favoring of the text. In "Seeking an End to the Primary Text," Lawrence E. Sullivan argues that the bias in religious studies "that regards scripted expression as the primary mode of intelligibility is misguided and distracts from the issue."³⁶ This is especially so in consideration of "unlettered peoples" whose reflections on and expressions of meaning exceed the bounds of texts, especially of sacred texts. Even in highly literate cultures, textuality does not exhaust the expressions and manifestations of religious meaning. This emphasis on the text owes in large part to the Christian (especially Protestant) milieu of nineteenth-century Europe in which the academic study of religion emerged. In Christianity the written text of the Bible carries revelatory authority, is a closed canon, and holds foundational status. Furthermore, the Gospel of John opens by proclaiming, "In the beginning was the Word [*logos*]." This *logos* signifies Jesus Christ, although by placing the *logos* "in the beginning," the crucial point is that the *logos* pre-exists the historical Jesus. It is the *proclaimed* word, the word spoken by God to the world.³⁷ Therefore, the pre-existent quality of *logos* in the Gospel of John lends a verbal force to Christianity. An emphasis on the verbal, of course, does not equate to an emphasis on the textual. The *logos* is the divine word spoken, not written.

Nevertheless, the authority of the spoken word eventually gave way to the authority of the written word. "In the beginning was the *logos*" became easily conflated with the notion that in the beginning was the written text, the closed canon. The Protestant Reformation (particularly Luther's principle of *sola scriptura*)

³⁵ My linking of logocentrism and textuality in this section may appear inappropriate given that Derrida, whom I have presented as the central opponent of logocentrism, writes extensively about the value of writing. Yet contrary to much misunderstanding, Derrida means something far more general by the term *writing* than mere graphical inscription on material. When Derrida promotes writing, it is not to privilege writing in the narrow sense (over orality, for example), but rather as an illustration of his opposition to transcendental signifieds. He is concerned with and critical of all structured forms of expression that reduce differentiation by means of any such metaphysical unity that somehow escapes the perpetual chain of signification. He does not appear concerned with promoting narrowly textual writing over other media of expression. For more on this, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's preface to Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, esp. lxviii-lxx.

³⁶ Lawrence E. Sullivan, "Seeking an End to the Primary Text," *Beyond the Classics? Essays in Religious Studies and Liberal Education* (ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Sheryl L. Burkhalter; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 42.

³⁷ According to G. Kittel, "the main emphasis of the term [*logos*] is always on saying something" ("Word and Speech in the New Testament," in *Theological Dictionary*, 4:102).

contributed significantly to that shift, as did another event of the sixteenth century: the invention of the printing press. Walter J. Ong argues concerning the shift from writing to print:

[P]rint replaced the lingering hearing-dominance in the world of thought and expression with the sight-dominance which had its beginning with writing but could not flourish with the support of writing alone. Print situates words in space more relentlessly than writing ever did. Writing moves words from the sound world to a world of visual space, but print locks words into positions in this space.³⁸

The invention of print technology had dramatic consequences for all humanistic studies, especially in fixing provisional meaning as final truth and making the fluidity and adaptability of oral expression a deficiency rather than an asset. The effects were also profound in Protestant Christianity, which came to associate the pre-existent *logos* with the pre-existent Bible as the Word of God. This contributed significantly to the textual emphasis of theological and religious studies.³⁹

In challenging the exclusively textual approaches to religious studies, Sullivan calls for greater attention to the ways in which “the religious conditions of humanity lie largely beyond the sacrality of scriptures.”⁴⁰ Christian theologians have also begun to recognize this and call for alternate ways of understanding the sources of theological construction. Robert Schreiter is one of the earliest to argue that context is as meaningfully intelligible as text. He developed what he calls a “semiotic study of culture” in recognition of the fact that theological meaning is not absent in oral cultures.⁴¹ Sheila Greeve Davaney argues that the contemporary scholarly shift away from cultural production at the level of the elites toward the “popular” level requires attentiveness to non-textual and even non-discursive sources.⁴² For such nontraditional theologians working at the intersection of theology and cultural studies, there is a deep recognition that privileging the text exclusively is not helpful for understanding the life-worlds of people in oral cultures, nor even of the majority of people in literate cultures.

What such scholars are promoting is the recovery of an early meaning of *logos* in the Gospel of John: the Word as an oral and aural pronouncement. The spoken *logos* is much more fluid than the written Word. Ironically, a return to the *logos* of the biblical *text* invites us to shift attention from the pure fixedness of textuality

³⁸ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1983) 119.

³⁹ Ong argues that even the attention given in biblical studies to oral traditions treats orality primarily in terms of that which will eventually be written. *Ibid.*, 170.

⁴⁰ Sullivan, 45.

⁴¹ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 49–73.

⁴² Sheila Greeve Davaney, “Theology and the Turn to Cultural Analysis,” in *Converging on Culture: Theologians in Dialogue with Cultural Analysis and Criticism* (ed. Delwin Brown, Sheila Greeve Davaney and Kathryn Tanner; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 6.

toward the hybrid dynamism of orality. In that way, the *logos* itself calls forth the *loco*.

Alambrista and the Theopoetics of U.S. Hispanic Theology

The film *Alambrista* is rich in theological meaning. A strictly textual approach to the study of religions would prohibit us from seeing that. The visual and oral media through which the film's message is conveyed require that a theological analysis of the film adopt a theopoetical methodology. U.S. Hispanic theologians argue that such a turn to theopoetics and aesthetics is essential for experiencing and expressing the religious dimensions of Mexican-American life.

One need not look far into the film or listen long to the musical soundtrack to find explicit references to faith and trust in God. One of the opening scenes takes place in a local chapel, in which Roberto and his mother kneel and pray before a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe.⁴³ God's name is frequently invoked in the musical lyrics. Though the phrase "*si Dios quiere . . .*" ("if God wills . . .") and its variations are rather commonplace among Hispanic people, it is not a thoughtless expression. The particular songs in *Alambrista* in which such a divine invocation appears illustrate a powerful theology of hope for the migrants. For example, the song "Adios, California" (heard during a deportation scene) includes these lyrics: "*Si Dios me concedel/Muy pronto regreso*" ("If God will allow me/I'll return very soon").⁴⁴ Again, in "El Venadito," we hear: "*Si con el favor de Dios dejo de ser alambrista/Cuando cruce otra vez ya sera como turista*" ("If with the favor of God I stop being alambrista/When I cross again it will be as a tourist.")⁴⁵ Return and deliverance (as in the Hebrew slaves' deliverance to the "promised land") is always cast as conditional upon God's will. Deference to God does not equal defeatist resignation. It does nothing to diminish the resilience, cunning and bravery displayed so movingly in the characters of the film. God is invoked at moments of hardship in order to prepare spiritually for another round of struggle. Calling God to mind enables one to maintain hope in the face of grave disappointment. It may, after all, be God's will that "I cross again." If so, one does not (and indeed cannot) stop trying.

It is not only in the references, verbal or visual, to explicit religious symbols that theological meaning is made and expressed. In his essay contribution to the anthology on *Alambrista* (an essay subtitled "Religious Dimensions in the Film"), David Carrasco focuses on the less overt displays of religious signification. To do so requires locating the religious in terms of an orientation toward that which

⁴³ For the significance of Our Lady of Guadalupe in U.S. Hispanic religiosity and *mestizo* consciousness as "neither an Indian goddess nor a European Madonna . . . neither Spanish nor Indian," yet who "is both and more," see Elizondo, *Future*, 57–66.

⁴⁴ Cuellar, "Notas," 194.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

is of ultimate significance.⁴⁶ The characters in *Alambrista* express and exert their religiosity; that is to say, they

come to terms with their ultimate significance . . . *not* primarily through the language or rites provided by Christian faith or overt forms of religion (though they are important in the film) but through the *ways and places* they labor and relate to their families and friends, and their experiences of human birth.⁴⁷

Carrasco's argument is that religiosity is expressed in terms of the orienting and life-sustaining function of productive work, food consumption and reproductive childbearing. The theme of childbirth frames the film, relating the birth experience to the hardship lived by migrants; the first birth in the film propels Roberto into migration to find sustenance for his family, while the second elicits a cry of delight that the baby, born just north of the border, is not "illegal." These film-framing geneses demonstrate "how these Mexican families are *oriented* toward crossing borders of poverty, labor opportunities and U.S. citizenship"⁴⁸ in a religiously significant way. Carrasco's essay makes evident that the theological expressions and religious dimensions of the borderland require looking beyond overt shows of religiosity.

Carrasco's success in probing the film and its characters for their religious dimensions depends on a methodological innovation theorized by various U.S. Hispanic theologians: the turn toward nontraditional media as legitimate sources for constructing and expressing theology.⁴⁹ In "U.S. Hispanic Popular Catholicism as Theopoetics," Roberto S. Goizueta challenges the devaluation and marginalization of non-conceptual forms of knowledge such as "symbol, ritual, narrative, metaphor, poetry, music, the arts."⁵⁰ Goizueta recovers the importance of popular religiosity and challenges theologians not to engage exclusively in abstract conceptual discourse, thereby disconnecting themselves from lived faith communities. This warning applies particularly to Hispanic theologians because "Latinos and Latinas live in a world where God is revealed primarily in flesh and blood, in symbols

⁴⁶ Here Carrasco references the definition of religion used by historian of religions Charles H. Long. David Carrasco, "Dead Walking, Making Food, and Giving Birth to *Alambristas*: Religious Dimensions in the Film," *Alambrista and the U.S.-Mexico Border: Film, Music, and Stories of Undocumented Immigrants* (ed. Nicholas J. Cull and David Carrasco; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004) 204.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁴⁹ This revaluation of alternative media is actually common to many, if not all, forms of liberation theology. See, for example, from two different contexts (North American black theology and Indian Dalit theology), James Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991); and Sathianathan Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁵⁰ Roberto S. Goizueta, "U.S. Hispanic Popular Catholicism as Theopoetics," *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise* (ed. Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Fernando F. Segovia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) 261.

and images; in Anglo society and its forms of Christianity, we are faced with a God who is revealed primarily in clear and distinct ideas.”⁵¹ While so absolute a demarcation between Latinos and Anglos goes too far, Goizueta is certainly correct to point out that, especially for a theology grounded in the lived experience of a particular people, the *form* of theological expression is as important if not more so than *content*.

Ana María Pineda offers some historical observations that clarify the importance of oral and aesthetic sources in the elaboration and construction of a U.S. Hispanic theology. In the Nahuatl culture that preceded the European invasion of Mesoamerica, it was not the written word that enabled communication. The two figures responsible for knowledge construction and transmission in that context were the *tlacuilo*, the artist who painted codices, and the *tlantanime*, “the guardian of the oral history of the people.”⁵² Pineda challenges those who wish to theologize out of the U.S. Hispanic experience to do so as their forebears did:

[T]he theologian must grapple with the lived reality of the community and then attempt to give voice to the challenges and religious understandings that it raises. In the tradition of the *tlamatinime* the theologian must learn to sing the songs that reveal the faith-experience of the *pueblo* in the full diversity of its socioeconomic, political, and cultural contexts and manifestations.⁵³

To perceive the theological wealth of the Nahuatl people’s descendents, one must seek out modern-day *tlacuilos* (such as the anonymous painters of public neighborhood murals) and modern-day *tlantanimes* (be they grandmothers and mothers, poets or educators) in Hispanic communities.⁵⁴

The aesthetic turn to theopoetics in U.S. Hispanic theology, together with Carrasco’s analysis of *Alambrista*’s subtle yet powerful religious dimensions, turns up the limits of traditional theology’s textual emphasis. Orality, music, art, poetry, and other means of expression are valid and even privileged forms and sources of theological expression. Insofar as textuality is connected to the privileging of the Word—of the *logos*—this critique of textuality also is a further critique of logocentrism. This critique relates to logocentrism’s homogenizing tendencies. Unlike printed words (which allow facile systematization and clarity of meaning), aesthetic experience often is messy, unsystematic, and irreducibly complex. Its inclusion demands a theological model that affords at least as much space for the heterogeneous, oral *loco* as it does for the homogenous, textual *logos*.

⁵¹ Ibid., 267.

⁵² Ana María Pineda, “The Oral Tradition of a People: *Forjadora de rostro y corazón*,” *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise* (ed. Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Fernando F. Segovia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) 108–9.

⁵³ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 112–16.

■ Limits to the *Loco*

The concept of the *loco* is not only germane to the religious experiences and theological expressions of U.S. Hispanics. As with Elizondo's assessment of Jesus' *mestizaje* in light of U.S. Hispanic *mestizaje*, the *loco* can also help recover repressed elements of Christianity: for example, the concept of "holy folly" or "crazy wisdom" at the heart of some Christian traditions.⁵⁵ One of the main themes of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."⁵⁶ Paul acknowledges that following a crucified Christ is craziness, madness, folly. Yet it is precisely such human foolishness that is divine wisdom. Jesus' nonconformist life—which led his family to question his sanity, his opponents to consider him possessed, and the authorities to condemn him to death—paradoxically made him the paragon of wisdom. Jesus belongs to a rather extensive wisdom tradition. It includes both the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible and such luminous thinkers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as Nicholas of Cusa and Erasmus.⁵⁷ They all show that folly, craziness, and madness hold a central place in the Christian tradition. Christianity is, according to these sources, far more *lococentric* than it is *logocentric*.

All the same, important questions remain. Are there not limits to the *loco*? How does one distinguish between "holy folly" and a merely eccentric, destructive defiance of conventions and norms? Are there dangers in romanticizing irrationality? A few borderland theologians warn that indeed there are. Roberto Goizueta, for example, warns against perpetuating false and demeaning stereotypes of Hispanics who in many ways have come to serve as the foils of the rational American of European descent. He notes, "To characterize the experience and values of U.S. Hispanics as irrational—even if in a complimentary tone—is thus to perpetuate our dehumanization."⁵⁸ Secondly, he argues that U.S. Hispanic theology should steer clear of the excesses of postmodernism, particularly its idealization of ambiguity, difference, and irrationality. Similarly, Manuel J. Mejido Costoya warns against succumbing to the allure of postmodernism's stress on "the plurality of particulars, alterity, and difference."⁵⁹ For both Goizueta and Mejido Costoya, the postmodern accent on difference and irrationality dilutes the critical-ethical thrust that is fundamental to Latin American liberation theology. Mejido Costoya laments, "An increasing number of U.S. Hispanic theologians understand U.S.

⁵⁵ See the first chapter, "The Wisdom of Holy Fools: A Way to the Love of Truth in Postmodernity," Peter Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: 2004) 3–22.

⁵⁶ 1 Cor 3:19 NRSV.

⁵⁷ See Phan, 14–16.

⁵⁸ Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos Con Jesus: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995) 144.

⁵⁹ Manuel J. Mejido Costoya, "The Postmodern: Liberation or Language," *Handbook of Latino Theologies*, 276.

Hispanic theology to be a *particular, local, contextual, or public* theology, and not a Liberation theology.”⁶⁰ Goizuta opposes a postmodernist conception of pluralism that suggests all options are equally valid:

Such a conception of pluralism is intrinsically antithetical to the very foundation of U.S. Hispanic theology and other Third World theologies; that foundation is the *preferential* option for one particular group, one particular social location, one particular set of experiences and values over other groups, social locations, experiences and values.⁶¹

It is God’s preferential option for the poor (a notion derived from Latin American liberation theologians like Gustavo Gutierrez) that U.S. Hispanic theologians should emphasize instead of a pluralism that makes the option for the poor merely one option among others.⁶²

These critiques demonstrate that the *loco*, taken in isolation, is inadequate. Multiplicity and irrationality are not ends in themselves. The deconstructive mode must be tempered by a constructive mode,⁶³ which makes possible ethical action, especially that done on behalf of the oppressed and marginalized. Cuellar is himself attuned to the need to balance the craziness from which he derives his stage name with the critical.⁶⁴ In his essay reflecting on the soundtrack to *Alambrista*, he includes a section titled “*Metodo a Locura*” (“Method to the Madness”). There he makes the point that multiplicity should never stray too far from an overarching method, a method that enables ethical critique:

Our “critical” orienting principle leads us to confront, in positive and constructive terms, those elitist and dominant individuals, institutions, and ideologies that have negative and destructive effects on our global society. In terms of *Alambrista* this means specifically working to get those who most benefit from the continued unscrupulous use and abuse of undocumented farm workers and day laborers . . . to change their practices.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ibid., 281.

⁶¹ Goizueta, *Caminemos*, 170–71.

⁶² Goizueta makes a similar point in his previously cited essay on theopoetics. There, he urges that theopoetics be distinguished from aestheticism. The latter is an end in itself, while the former (grounded in historical praxis) points to a God who becomes concrete in history. The stress on aesthetics thus cannot be divorced from ethics. See Goizueta, “U.S. Hispanic,” 266 (esp. n. 19).

⁶³ In fact, as Spivak makes clear in her preface to *Of Grammatology*, deconstruction does not content itself with merely replacing *writing* (as Derrida broadly conceives this word) with speech, or logocentrism with *lococentrism*. Quoting Derrida, Spivak writes that “[t]o deconstruct the opposition is first . . . ‘to overthrow [*renverser*] the hierarchy.’ . . . But in the next phase of deconstruction, this reversal must be displaced, the winning term put under erasure.” Deconstruction aims “to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it.” The opposing terms of the binary are always in flux. Meaning is located precisely in the shifting borderland between. See Spivak, lxxvi–lxxviii.

⁶⁴ Indeed, the methodological assessments and ethical critiques that follow suggest a borderland *mestizaje* in Cuellar’s stage name. He not just any *loco*; he is *Dr. Loco*, with all the implications of expertise, status, and even authority to diagnose madness that the doctoral title carries.

⁶⁵ Cuellar, “Notas,” 182.

An ethical, orienting principle cannot be compromised by the celebration of genre-mixing, bilingualism, and hybridity at the borderlands. To use the terms of this paper, the *lococentric* should not eclipse the *logocentric*. The two should be held in dynamic and dialectic tension.

In *Alambrista*'s soundtrack, this principle is exemplified in the pervasive blues motif of "Dead-Dog Tired in Stockton Blues," a song heard in various parts of the film. In particular, when Roberto, exhausted to the point of passing out on the road and then being mugged, is saved from further hardship by a white American waitress and an African-American cook, this blues theme in the background seems especially well-suited. It provides a unifying undercurrent for the three blue-collar workers, bunched together at or near the bottom of their society's socioeconomic hierarchy. The blues itself has its roots in the experience of slavery and post-slavery apartheid suffered by African-Americans, yet the blues transcends race and place. In a powerful essay comparing the flamenco music of one of Europe's most marginalized populations—the gypsies—to the African-American blues, Ralph Ellison writes:

The gypsies, like the slaves, are an outcast though undefeated people who have never lost their awareness of the physical source of man's most spiritual moments; even their Christ is a man of flesh and bone who suffered and bled before his apotheosis. In its more worldly phases the flamenco voice resembles the blues voice, which mocks the despair stated explicitly in the lyric, and it expresses the great human joke directed against the universe, that joke which is the secret of all folklore and myth: that though we be dismembered daily we shall always rise up again.⁶⁶

Such defiant and subversive hope, steeped in suffering and hardship, is characteristic of Roberto and his struggles north of the border. The blues music in the film's soundtrack accentuates Roberto's ability to stare tragedy in the face and transcend it.

Cuellar's inclusion of the blues is not merely aesthetic for the sake of musical pluralism; rather, it functions as a protest against suffering. It operates in what Bhabha calls the "Third Space of enunciation," which is "based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*."⁶⁷ The experience of the blues is not absolutely eclipsed by the *lococentric mestizaje* of Cuellar's soundtrack. The *logos* remains in terms of the universalized experience of exploitation, much like the ethical orienting principle to which Cuellar refers.⁶⁸ In the end, the postmodern celebration of madness and dispersions cannot efface certain experiences that defy deconstruction. One is

⁶⁶ Ralph Ellison, *Living with Music: Ralph Ellison's Jazz Writings* (ed. Robert G. O'Meally; New York: The Modern Library, 2001) 100.

⁶⁷ Bhabha, *Location*, 37–38.

⁶⁸ In other aspects of the film, there is a certain cross-cultural universality to oppression. In her contribution to the *Alambrista* anthology, Cordelia Candelaria writes, "The film illustrates that the Mexican worker with a green card or without; the Mexican American by birth or naturalized; the

oppression and the response to it of the "preferential option for the poor." Another is the blues.

Nevertheless, whatever and wherever the universal *logos* is, it is never pure and unadulterated. The blues and the experiences of oppression that give rise to them are never abstract. Whether in the particularities of the life-worlds and musical modalities of African American slaves, Spanish gypsies, or Mexican immigrants, the blues must always be translated and contextualized. The *logos* is not eclipsed by the *loco*. Yet at the same time, the *logos* cannot but pass through the *loco*.

■ Conclusion

If exclusive *lococentrism* is as inadequate as exclusive *logocentrism*, we are better off understanding the *logos* and the *loco* as complementary poles of a conceptual *mestizaje*. Yet for our purposes, even inverting of the *logos-loco* dichotomy is not the ideal; there further remains good reason for skepticism even of the more modest goal of complementary tension. How far can traditional theology be pressed to relinquish the predominance of its *logocentrism*? The *logos* is entrenched. It goes as far back as the opening verse of the Gospel of John, which takes it back infinitely further: "In the beginning was the *logos*." Even the very word *theo-logia* has the *logos* at its root. This is the consequence of the Christian movement's first border crossing, into the conceptual universe of Hellenistic philosophy. In light of Christianity's latest border crossings, perhaps a new concept is in order. Can the tradition allow itself to borrow as freely from the Hispanic as it once did from the Hellenic? Is there a place for *theo-locura* (theo-madness) in relation to *theo-logia* (theo-rationality)? Can the theological discipline relocate itself to the borderlands between *logocentrism* and *lococentrism*?

To better situate such questions, one other aspect of *lococentrism* remains to be explored. If the center is the *loco*, it seems Yeats would be correct: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold." That is the paradox of *lococentrism*. It places the borderland at the center and the center at the borderland. The perimeter moves in, and the center moves out. Does that not describe what is happening in the United States today? Latin American immigrants are no longer enriching the U.S. Southwest alone, but increasingly, the entirety of the country. The borderland is expanding, and this not only through centripetal immigration, but also through centrifugal globalization. In Elizondo's words: "[A]s the mestizo 'in-between' keeps expanding, as the 'frontera' keeps expanding both north and south at the same time, it keeps including more and more peoples, ethnicities, and races."⁶⁹ In both directions, the future is becoming *mestizo*.

Cultural borderlands are expanding and with them, borderland consciousness. More and more people are becoming aware of their own internal ambiguities,

border patrol whether Anglo, Chicano, or another ethnicity; and the U.S. American worker share the same immigrant and hybrid story of transmigration." Candelaria, "Tightrope Walking," 145.

⁶⁹ Elizondo, *Future*, 129.

hybridities often repressed in the interest of constructing a stable, consistent and “pure” sense of self. It is tempting and perhaps natural to imagine oneself as centered. I speak from personal experience. I embrace my ambiguities, but I did not come to do so naturally or effortlessly. It took the jibe of a construction worker in Brazil to wake me from my logocentric slumber. It seems that we are all just a moment away from being forced to recognize that existentially even if not epidermally, borders are always and already crossed. That which purports to be stable, unified, and centered is (whether we acknowledge it or not) a borderland. Any center we hold cannot itself hold.

To complicate the center does not mean to abandon the language of center, but to recognize that there we find not the *logos* alone, but the *logos* shot through with the *loco*. There we find not a unity behind the plurality, but a plurality *within* the unity. To quote Elizondo again, the new *mestizo* humanity will be characterized by “a great common unity that we all seek but have not yet experienced. This new unity will not be homogeneity, a humanity without differences; it will be a new mosaic of the human race.”⁷⁰ It will not be the *logos* underlying the plurality, but the *loco* enriching the unity.

The message to the border patrol of traditional theology is simply this: logocentric purity diminishes theology because it fails to account not only for the *loco* peripheral to the *logos*, but also for the *loco* inherent to the *logos*. Such affirmations are *logically* destined to remain marginal. Borderland theology shares this in common with Roberto and the countless real-life *alambristas* risking their lives everyday at the U.S.-Mexico borderland.

It also shares this in common with the “hidden gospels,” those early Christian documents (many only recently discovered) that offer accounts about Jesus that are alternative, complimentary and sometimes contradictory to those of the canonical gospels. The authority and impenetrability of the canon being what it is, these narratives will remain non-biblical and, in the eyes of traditional theology, heterodoxical. Borderland theologians might consider joining ranks with this tradition, adding their own “hidden gospel” to those already uncovered. It would be similar to the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, and the Gospel of Judas in that it too can anticipate the impossibility of its canonization, the guarantee of its marginality. Yet it would also differ, at least in its refusal of textual containment. Its message would be better expressed in voice than in print, in poetry than in prose. It could be called the Gospel of the *Alambrista*, and it would open like so:

In the beginning was the *logos*;
But in the *logos* was the *loco*.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 102.

The Emerging Distinction between Theology and Religion at Nineteenth-Century Harvard University

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Many scholars of religion who teach today in nondenominational schools may take it for granted that these schools have no institutional mandate to espouse a particular religious agenda. Yet, how did this relatively new approach become common during the last century, when in the preceding era the opposite was true? A close reading of one context or institution can reveal broader trends applicable in many other realms. The evolution of the approach to religious scholarship at nineteenth-century Harvard can serve as one such specific, but widely illuminating, point of inquiry. The deliberate shift away from instruction in doctrinal theology toward a more modern approach to religion as an academic field of study became a prominent trend in American higher education, with Harvard leading the way. But why did Harvard pursue this particular agenda in advance of other institutions? This article suggests that the answer lies largely in political concerns. Harvard was concerned with issues of perception and the practical consequences resulting from public expression of disapprobation.

Other scholars in recent years have considered the evolving roles of theology and religion in the nineteenth-century American academy. Two works have emerged as particularly significant and represent key current interpretations of the distinction between theology and religion in this era: George Marsden's *The Soul of the American University* and Julie Reuben's *The Making of the Modern University*.

Marsden argues that the pattern embodied in the twentieth-century academy of "the virtual exclusion of religious perspectives," or at least the viewing of religiously informed perspectives as "obscurantist," was a pattern that Christian liberals actually established in the nineteenth century in a deliberate effort to move away

from theology as an enterprise in the university context.¹ These nineteenth-century Christians, “having defined themselves increasingly in terms of their service to the public . . . were divesting themselves of the specifics of their Christian heritage.”² For Marsden, no place serves as a better example of this pattern than Harvard. Marsden focuses on the late-nineteenth century when considering the evolution of Harvard, and he presents the religious perspectives of the administration and faculty as so vague and vacuous as to allow them to posit “that whatever Harvard does simply *is* Christian.”³ In Marsden’s assessment, the “humanistic religion of humanity and high culture” espoused by Eliot and relevant faculty “was conceived of by most of its proponents not so much in opposition to Christianity as an extension of its liberating and uplifting spirit.”⁴ Marsden clearly disagrees with their self-perception. In his view, the humanism which liberal Protestants espoused in the academy was not an extension of Christianity but an abnegation of its theological claims.

Reuben in some ways is responding to Marsden. She asserts that by emphasizing the fault of the liberal Protestants in the way that he does, Marsden has neglected to give attention to “the connection between educators’ commitment to scientific technique and secularization.”⁵ For her, religion in general and theology in particular were pushed aside because of the failure of a new scientific approach to bridge the gap between functional analysis of religion and even the most basic forms of belief, resulting in widespread student indifference, which together served only to confirm the “intellectual marginality” of religion.⁶ If Reuben assigns any fault for the marginalization of religion, she attributes it to the inability of curriculum reformers to successfully incorporate a scientific approach to religion (focused here on the period 1890–1920).

In these two texts, we have divergent approaches to explaining the changes in the religion curriculum. On the one hand, Marsden’s analysis of Harvard (as one of many schools he considers) does not provide a full investigation of the religious perspectives of those active in bringing change, and thus misses the complex movements of theology and politics behind the scenes motivating change. On the other hand, Reuben, in contrast to Marsden, is interested in following the influence of science and the failure of the later reformers to create a religion curriculum that met contemporary academic standards and retained relevance. Her analysis, while helpfully identifying the modern scientific approach that scholars wanted to embrace, does not do full justice to the previous theological model that was

¹ George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford Press, 1994) 7.

² *Ibid.*, 415.

³ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁵ Julie Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 107, 113, 101.

intentionally being left behind. Harvard was not just moving forward toward something new, it was deliberately rejecting something old.

This article proposes an analysis distinct from, but complementary to, both of these earlier approaches. Another way of responding to Marsden is to give careful consideration to the shifting role of theology and specifically to the milieu of the central figures urging change in the nineteenth-century context. This should be an interpretation that not only hears what these figures claim for themselves but takes account of the intensely political nature of religion in this era. Theology had become a veritable minefield, and as Harvard discovered early in the century, one false step could cost dearly.

Students at Harvard College in the early-nineteenth century were taught the “truths” of systematic theology during at least half of their undergraduate program of study—as had been the case since the school’s founding. This was the common pattern among American colleges in this era. However, by mid-nineteenth century, three prominent Harvard presidents declared that their institution had no business being in the theology business. President Josiah Quincy penned a twenty-page statement of vision for the school in 1840, and in his very first sentence declared that “Harvard University is not a theological establishment.”⁷ His successor, James Walker assented and argued that this principle was true across the board in higher education. “Of course,” Walker wrote in 1855, “it is no longer necessary that the religious teaching, or the religious discipline of colleges, should look to making men theologians.”⁸ Theology was considered a relic of the past, or at least the domain of those engaged in providing a narrowly sectarian education—an enterprise viewed with open suspicion by these Harvard figures. President Charles Eliot by the 1870’s affirmed, and ultimately expanded upon, the position articulated by his predecessors. He regularly asserted that “religious instruction of an exegetical or dogmatic character cannot well be offered to its students by an undenominational school.”⁹ Quincy, Walker, and Eliot all possessed a politically savvy understanding of the importance of public perception, and this was a major factor shaping their agenda with regard to theology as an academic enterprise.

President Josiah Quincy (1829–1845)

While President Quincy was loathe to admit it, the Harvard that he inherited upon his appointment in 1829 was very much theological in orientation. In Quincy’s estimation, this emphasis on theology was the cause of many of his administrative headaches. The theology that had been taught to Harvard students since 1805 by Professor Henry Ware, Sr. reflected the distinctive and liberal principles of Unitarianism

⁷ Josiah Quincy, “Notes on Harvard College,” unpublished, 1840, Harvard University Archives (HUA).

⁸ James Walker, “Discourse,” September 1855, 10, HUA.

⁹ Charles W. Eliot, “What Place Should Religion Have in a College,” unpublished address given before the 19th Century Club of New York, 3 February 1886, 14, HUA.

(in that year a Unitarian was appointed to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity, the oldest endowed chair in North America). The Unitarians suggested a revision of traditionally authoritative Christian doctrines, including teachings regarding human nature, the person and work of Christ, salvation, and even the being of God. As one might suspect, given the conflict between liberal Unitarianism and Trinitarian Christian doctrine, battles over Harvard's official theological position ensued. By the 1830's this still noisy debate over Harvard's politically incorrect stance was continuing to cost the school students. Conservatives targeted potential Harvard parents, who were "entreated not to jeopardize their children's hopes, both as respects the present and the future life, by subjecting them to the temptations and dangers to which an education at Harvard College would inevitably expose both their bodies and souls."¹⁰ Quincy spent his first few years in office trying to calm the situation and sought ways to attract more students to his shrinking and impoverished school, but to no avail. Harvard College was coming into dire financial straights, and Quincy was helpless to remedy the situation. Finally, the pragmatic solution to all his troubles appeared in the form of a physical impairment. When the ancient Unitarian Hollis Professor (now suffering from near blindness) retired after thirty-five years of service, Quincy gleefully refused to find a replacement. His inactivity set the standard for presidential lethargy on this issue, for despite repeated faculty protests, the Hollis Professorship was deliberately left unoccupied for over forty years, until it then reappeared in the removed context of the Divinity School—although even the ongoing existence of the Divinity School itself was threatened on several occasions in this era.

Quincy's plan, as clearly endorsed by his successors, was to get out of the theology business. He correctly attributed many of his College's troubles to the public and constant concern voiced by conservatives regarding the shockingly liberal practice of a college teaching Unitarian beliefs to pliable undergraduates. Indeed, there seems to have been an increase in Calvinist anti-Harvard activity in the 1830s, some quarter century after the initial appointment of a Unitarian theologian. One widely circulated booklet echoed the sentiments felt by many in this era:

Whence has it come to pass that, from the unequalled advantages of a College, the property of the whole people of the Commonwealth, for which they have been so often and so liberally taxed, all the people are virtually excluded, except for the few who are Unitarians, and those who are willing to submit their sons to a probability, amounting almost to a certainty, of their becoming Unitarians? . . . What right have the Unitarians to the exclusive monopoly of Harvard University? Why is it that none but Unitarians can safely send their sons to the College of Massachusetts? . . . Children of the Pilgrims, where is the spirit of your fathers? People of Massachusetts, where is your

¹⁰ Quoted in Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936) 259.

famed, unyielding resistance of aggression, your unbending determination to vindicate your sacred rights?¹¹

Once Harvard no longer taught theology (because of its intentionally vacant professorship), Quincy went on a public relations campaign, asserting to any and all who would listen that Harvard did not teach Unitarian theology.

It is now more than sixteen years since I accepted office of President of Harvard College, and I here openly and unequivocally declare, that, so far from the influence of Harvard College being devoted to the propagation of Unitarianism, or the labors of its teachers being directed to this object, this has never, so far as I have seen, known, or believed, been made the chief or any special object of their thoughts or labors at all. For the purpose of avoiding, as much as possible, the communication of any peculiarities of religious opinion to the students, writings free from such an objection by the universal consent of all classes of Christians, such as 'Paley's Evidences,' and 'Butler's Analogy,' are selected as text books.¹²

Quincy was correct in asserting the near universal acceptance of Butler and Paley in this era. These texts advocated the principles of natural religion and endorsed the Bible as a revealed document, but avoided engaging in the fully detailed nuances of systematic theology as an enterprise. However, Professor Ware's old lectures had moved beyond discussion of these noncontroversial texts and into the specific doctrines of Unitarian theology. A review of Ware's lectures and his attempt therein to convince students of the reasonableness and veracity of Unitarian dogma indicate that he indeed promulgated a particular theology.

What Quincy's statements make clear, other than the fact that he was willing to bend the truth, is that he was now, in 1845, able to make a significant number of these claims simply because he had recently altered the curriculum so that Unitarian theology (or any systematic theology) was no longer being taught in the College. While he could not deny the theological positions held by his largely Unitarian faculty, he was able to argue that these were not being explicitly taught to the students, since he had dismantled the theology courses for precisely these political and fiscal reasons. Quincy was a pragmatic administrator, and declared that he considered "it an incumbent duty of every officer of the institution to abstain from any act tending to bring within its walls discussions upon questions which the passions and interests of the community are divided."¹³ Thus, in bringing an end to theology in the college, Quincy was performing his "duty." By happy coincidence, this obligation coincided with his personal view of theology as a subject. For in his

¹¹Hollis, *Facts and Documents in Relation to Harvard College* (Boston: T. R. Marvin, 1829) 94, 96.

¹² Response of Quincy to charges made by George Bancroft in 1845. Quoted in Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard*, 259.

¹³ Quoted in James Walker, *Memoir of Josiah Quincy* (Cambridge: John Wilson, 1867) 51.

inaugural address, he had declared his desire to “break the shackles of this ancient discipline [theology], to remove the obstacles from the path of the intellect.”¹⁴

The complete removal of theology seems like quite a risk for Quincy to take, for such a radical maneuver might attract even more undesired attention, but he had few options. If Quincy had appointed a Trinitarian to the Hollis Chair (unlikely given his own leanings), Harvard’s then Unitarian support base would have been in an uproar. At the same time, he could hardly afford to continue to stir up conservative resentment by appointing yet another Unitarian. So, he hoped that the best defense was no offense, so to speak. As it turned out, Quincy’s plan was surprisingly effective. The public attacks from conservative Trinitarians virtually disappeared under his new policy. The only residual issue was the occasional critique of the school for failing to offer sufficient religious instruction to its students. On this issue a few faculty and members of the overseers were the loudest critics, but their concerns seem to have been largely ignored by the administration.

President James Walker (1853–1860)

Some ten years later, President Walker needed to find a solution to this lingering problem left to him by Quincy. In response to the continued internal requests urging expanded religious instruction, he created a new Chair of Christian Morals. While maintaining an historically minded concern not to stir up the old embers of doctrinal debate, he asserted that “this [new] Professorship is not properly a theological one.”¹⁵ Walker asked, who would, or could, protest a professor offering moral instruction based upon the Bible? He provided stipulations that this new professor was to rely only upon broad principles provided by natural and special revelation to encourage ethical living. The Bible was considered safe fodder for teaching, and the guidelines for the Plummer Professor indicated that he was not to move beyond that uncontroversial realm and draw from the well of systematic or doctrinal theology.

Walker’s plan of a new professorship grew out of a context of a decade of debates between the faculty, the Harvard Corporation and the Overseers, in which Walker himself had an important role. Before Walker was in office, the faculty, concerned over the vacant Hollis chair, had petitioned the Corporation (Harvard’s most powerful governing body) in 1844 regarding “the want of a Professor of Systematic Theology.”¹⁶ The Corporation failed to respond to the plea, and two years later the Overseers (Harvard’s secondary governing body), after some urging from the faculty, decided to revisit the issue. The report of 1846, under then Overseer James Walker, noted that “the religious condition of the students is not as good now as it has been in times past.”¹⁷ For previously, students had been subject to

¹⁴ Josiah Quincy, Inaugural Address, 2 June 1829, unpublished, 3, HUA.

¹⁵ James Walker to R. C. Winthrop, 20 March 1855, HUA.

¹⁶ Corporation Records, vol. 8, 30 March 1844, 232, HUA.

¹⁷ Committee Report on the Religious Condition of Students, June 1846, HUA.

more “conscious influences of religious principles,” and it should be “questioned whether the College has kept pace with the community in a growing sense of the value of religious culture,” which is by and large considered “an indispensable part of a liberal education.” Ever aware of the danger lurking with regard to public controversy on religion, the committee did urge caution. “For obvious reasons, most of them originating in the religious differences which prevail, the College is obliged to rely on the old and universally acknowledged means of Christian culture, such as instruction in the evidences of Natural and Revealed religion.” They suggested a post akin to a “Pastor of the College,” who was to exert a general “religious influence” not only upon the students, but also upon the faculty.¹⁸

That same year, President Everett, Walker’s immediate predecessor, echoed this perspective in a letter to the faculty of the College. New to his office, Everett stated that “what observation I have been able to make of the state of the Institution . . . leads me to fear, that it is suffering under an almost total absence of religious influence, and that this defect is blighting its highest interests.”¹⁹ Something had to be done to bolster the presence of religious instruction in the College. “The duty which I owe to my station in the University, to the young men for whose character we are responsible, to the extent of making every practicable effort for their moral improvement, and above all to our Common Master, has seemed to me to admit no compromise.”²⁰

The Overseers, led by Walker, continued to harp on this issue. They proceeded to compare the College’s current situation “to its past history; to its origin, in the Christian faith, not less than in the love of learning, which distinguished its founders,” thereby indicating that they did not fully understand the current political concerns of the Corporation or the importance of avoiding additional religious controversy. Instead, they chastised the school’s leadership for neglecting “the care, which was always taken, till within the last few years, to give the young men opportunities of instruction” in matters of religion. Harvard College, they said, “must not be so unfaithful to the associations, which hang about her name, as even to appear to undervalue the formation of character, and the highest elements in our natures.”²¹ They wanted action and here indicated their new realization that they needed to provide not only a moral but also a political reason for action on the part of the Corporation. For if the school appeared to outsiders to have an insufficient interest in religion or character formation, then the old problems that had been resolved with discretion by President Quincy might return to haunt Harvard in a slightly modified fashion.

When Walker came into the Presidency on the heels of these events, he sought an agenda that balanced the desire for inclusion of religion with the political realities

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Edward Everett, Open Letter to the Faculty, May 1846, HUA.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Committee to Consider the Resolution of Dr. Gannett, March 1849, HUA.

of the nineteenth-century religious landscape. He created a new professorship that was carefully designed to safely navigate these dangerous waters. In correspondence with the Chairman of the Committee on the Rules and Statutes of the new Plummer Professorship, Walker emphasized the importance of avoiding any appearance of partisanship. For this position, "sectarian action is not thought of. So contrary is every kind of sectarian action to the taste, the judgment, and the policy of the Corporation, that if this officer were to be justly charged with it, they would deem it sufficient grounds for removal."²² This was a bold claim for a Unitarian President who sat on a Corporation of Unitarian members that controlled a Divinity School with Unitarian faculty. Yet, despite the almost absurd nature of this assertion for mid-nineteenth century Harvard, it was still an astute political position to maintain. Walker was likely repeating these claims in an attempt to overcome previous perception problems. He indicated that with the Plummer Chair, sectarianism did not seem a potential danger, "because the Professorship is not properly a theological one."²³ For, if this professor was not dealing with doctrinal or systematic theology, then how would he fall into sectarian debate? This is precisely why the Corporation wanted a new position, rather than filling the long-empty Hollis Chair. This new professorship was specifically designed to avoid the old theological hot spots, and as such could not "provide an excuse for doing nothing in the fear of doing something that was meant to be prohibited. We have had too much of that already, as regards the religious condition of the College."²⁴

A few weeks later, Walker further delineated his vision of the Plummer Professorship. He contrasted it with the older and now vacant position, explaining that "it is difficult to conceive of two professorships more unlike each other than the Hollis and Plummer Professorships. The incumbent of the former is to be continually employed in reading lectures on 'Positive, Controversial, and Casuistical Divinity' [systematic theology] . . . What the incumbent of the latter is to do is wholly practical and devotional."²⁵ Walker had successfully maneuvered through the hostile territory of religion and avoided the potential problems which had frozen action on the part of the Corporation for over a decade. The Plummer Professorship was a strategic triumph. As he noted, "it is believed that the friends of the College, and the public generally, do not wish to have dogmatic and controversial divinity taught at present to the undergraduates, as it must be, if the Hollis Professorship is filled, and its statutes obeyed."²⁶ For this very reason, the Hollis Professorship was to remain vacant until 1882, when it reappeared at the Divinity School, rather than the College.

²² James Walker to R. C. Winthrop, 20 March 1855, HUA.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ James Walker to R. C. Winthrop, 2 April 1855, HUA.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

The increasing divide between the College and the Divinity School grew to a chasm in the mid-nineteenth century. Few people who work in today's recently renovated Divinity Hall would ever suspect that during this era, the building was almost turned into a sock factory. The same type of political motivations that moved the Corporation and President to avoid systematic theology in the College also caused them to advocate the separation of the Divinity School from Harvard. One of New England's manufacturing families was apparently eyeing the structure as an ideal facility for the production of men's hosiery, should such a "divorce" take place.²⁷

As early as 1831, under Quincy, there had been public discussions about the discontent of the Corporation regarding the relation of the Divinity School to Harvard University. The inchoate School, then only a decade and a half old, was considered by those in power to be something of a bastard child. According to Corporation member F. C. Gray, "the separation of the Theological Institution from the College was most important and desirable, perceiving how much prejudice against the College was caused by the union of it with this institution."²⁸ Mr. Gray described the connection of the Divinity school to the University as "impolitic" in light of continuing Trinitarian hostility over Harvard's earlier theological shift toward Unitarianism. He assumed that the interests of the College, the older and more central body of the University, should be protected despite the consequences for the troublesome "Theological Department."

This sentiment was echoed twenty years later by President Jared Sparks in correspondence with his predecessor, Edward Everett. "I agree entirely with the views expressed in your letter. I argued in that way when Divinity Hall was erected, and have never seen cause to change my opinion. Cambridge is not the proper place for the School, and the quicker it is removed the better for all parties and all interests concerned."²⁹ During Sparks's tenure, great efforts were made to bring about the desired division. A report of the Board of Overseers on this issue asserted the advisability of division "on account of any embarrassments that now attend, or at some future time may grow out of, these relations."³⁰ According to their analysis, the connection established between these two schools "was, from the very first, a matter of apprehension and regret to some of the friends of both Institutions."³¹

²⁷ "You are entirely right about Cambridge," wrote Samuel Lawrence to his brother in 1844, "and the sooner the authorities see it the better, and a Divorce takes place. The Divinity building would make a good stocking mill with a steam engine, and I know a party who would like it." Ronald Story, *The Forging of an Aristocracy: Harvard and the Boston Upper Class* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1980) 79.

²⁸ *Review of Publications Relating to Harvard College* (Boston, 1831) 391, HUA.

²⁹ Jared Sparks to Edward Everett, 20 February 1852, HUA.

³⁰ *Report of a Committee of the Overseers and Memorial of the Corporation of Harvard College on the Relations Between the Theological School and the College* (Boston: John Wilson & Son, 1852) 3, HUA.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

Although early patrons had been optimistic that the association could exist “without prejudice to the College as a whole, without alienating any of its friends, or opening any disturbing issues among the public,” in actuality “this generous hope” was not fulfilled.³² This unfortunate union of Divinity and College proved “prejudicial to both,” having “impeded the success of the former, and brought into question the impartiality of the administration of the latter.”³³ Again, their concerns seemed primarily oriented toward the best interests of the College, fearing that “the general repute of the College has suffered from this cause,” for through this relationship, “the College proper incurs the odium of sectarian partiality.”³⁴

Although many close to the situation maintained that the “reciprocal influence of the School and the College is practically nothing,” the larger issue was the perception of the relation, by which the College suffered “an injury to its reputation.”³⁵ The Divinity School could potentially become, or some thought was already becoming, a public relations nightmare which might threaten the stability and status of the College. This is what drove the Corporation during the Walker administration to seek permission from the State Legislature to dissolve the relationship with the Divinity School. In the end, the Senate refused the request, but according to Sydney Ahlstrom, this had little impact upon the treatment of the Divinity School. President Walker’s way of handling the situation “brought about a separation of the School, almost as complete, as if, like the Medical School, it were in another city.”³⁶ What the legislature would not permit by law, Walker accomplished in fact.

The point of this analysis is to draw out the extent to which decisions relating to religion at nineteenth-century Harvard were motivated by the issue of public perception. No one in a decision-making position at Harvard felt that the Divinity School was doing anything improper (for they were almost exclusively Unitarians). Rather, the fear of stirring up old controversies with the Trinitarians and the public unrest which followed those episodes are what motivated policy initiatives. The same principle can be applied to the broader policies of the College pertaining to religion. The decision to stay away from doctrinal theology (a minefield), while at the same time keeping religion as a presence through the Plummer Professorship (to avoid charges of secularism) proved politically expedient.

This story reveals that Quincy and Walker had brought about genuine change. As the eminent historian George H. Williams has noted, the early nineteenth century at Harvard was the era “when theology became differentiated as the primary concern of the Divinity School and was in consequence moved to the margin of

³² Ibid., 11.

³³ Ibid., 12.

³⁴ Ibid., 14.

³⁵ Samuel Eliot, *A Sketch of the History of Harvard College and of its Present State* (Boston: Charles Little and James Brown, 1848) 124.

³⁶ Sydney Ahlstrom, “The Middle Period,” in *The Harvard Divinity School: Its Place in Harvard University and in American Culture* (ed. George Huntston Williams; Boston: Beacon Press, 1954) 102.

the University.”³⁷ Quincy and Walker’s subsequent efforts to sever relations with the Divinity School only underscored the message that theology was considered by Harvard to be a political liability.

■ President Charles W. Eliot (1869–1909)

President Walker’s Plummer Professorship and its broad conception of religion was the guiding principle for the “Religious Instruction” offered by the College for several decades, until President Eliot later came to consider even such a vague affirmation of religion to be an inappropriate position for the school to espouse. For him, any claims founded upon the principles of special or even general revelation were anathema. Religious presuppositions such as these did not meet the epistemological standards that Eliot imposed on his University. Politics remained a motivation behind change, now with an emphasis not merely on content (avoiding doctrinal theology), but also on the broader application of proper scholarly methodology in religion.

Eliot wanted to free the educational experience from the authoritative control and religious agenda of organized Christianity. This was particularly important in relation to courses pertaining to religion specifically. As he explained, a true “university will not demand of its officers and students the creed, or press upon them the doctrine, of any particular religious organization.”³⁸ Eliot’s 1886 address to the 19th Century Club of New York, “What Place Should Religion Have in a College?,” indicated that to take any sort of doctrinal stance, or even to offer “inculcation” of general religious principles would mean that a college did not fit in Eliot’s desired “undenominational” category, for to ascend to this level, schools must take pains to eschew even the “appearance of partiality” in matters of religion.³⁹ In his estimation, religion should not be granted any kind of special status. In another address that year to the Unitarian Club of Boston, Eliot stated, “it seems to me that all colleges should try to exhibit in every department of research and every classroom, one and the same serious, candid, truth-loving spirit, no matter whether the subject in hand be philology, philosophy, history, natural science, or religion.”⁴⁰ Notice that Eliot sought to avoid the “appearance” of partiality. Just as with Quincy and Walker, perception, or politics, remained a key motivation for Eliot. Only now he sought to avoid not Trinitarian controversies but rather the impolitic position of a university appearing to have an epistemological bias.

Here was Eliot’s real agenda for religion, he wanted it to be handled in a “scientific” fashion. Eliot realized that his model was not an orthodox proposal. “The scientific conception of God is, of course, not the same as that held in any

³⁷ George H. Williams, “An Excursus,” in *Harvard Divinity School*, 351.

³⁸ Charles W. Eliot, “Address at the Inauguration of Daniel C. Gilman,” in *Educational Reform: Essays and Addresses* (New York: Century, 1898) 43.

³⁹ Eliot, “What Place,” 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

organized church. Nevertheless it *is* a religious conception.”⁴¹ He recognized that “there is danger” in this approach, in that “respectful neutrality should appear to be indifferent to religion,” but he felt that such concerns would only be asserted by the narrow-minded. In Eliot’s view, only those with dogmas to defend would label an education based on respectful neutrality as “Godless.” Eliot argued that such a label “pays no allegiance to ‘our’ one truth in religion.”⁴² To those with less biased sympathies, however, the impartiality of his “scientific” model was clearly superior, for this model allowed religion to be taught in accordance with the same standards applied to any other discipline, and this was the only acceptable approach for Eliot.

In his 1878 annual report, Eliot affirmed that religious subjects held a valid place in the university curriculum, but they had to be handled in a specific fashion to avoid regression back to the old approach of inculcation. Thus, “the literature and criticism of the New Testament, ethics, natural theology, philosophy in its relation to religion, ethnic religions, and the history of religions are all, when properly defined and treated, matters of pure science.”⁴³ The term “scientific approach” became Eliot’s mantra in relation to religion, and he used it frequently when discussing his model for the scholarly treatment of religion. It became the standard by which he evaluated any methodology, and he insisted that religion match the standards applied to other subjects.

In the new courses on religion developed during Eliot’s administration, Christianity and its scriptures were to be studied under the same methodology applied to any other religion. In his estimation, any special status granted to Christianity would bias the academic enterprise and simultaneously restrict academic freedom. Even at the Divinity School, where theology as a discipline had been relegated decades earlier, Eliot now specifically encouraged the study of “religion” over that of “theology.” Thus, when Eliot was making plans for his revamp of the Divinity School in 1879, he wrote to Francis Greenwood Peabody that he encouraged following the method of “comparative religion (which is a purely scientific subject like history).”⁴⁴ He defended his stance by asserting that “it is impossible to teach Christian dogmatic theology to any purpose in a university which declares itself unsectarian, without impairing public confidence in the genuineness of the impartiality which the institution professes.”⁴⁵ In the words of one of Eliot’s often repeated phrases, “a university is not founded on a sect,” and he sought above all else to keep his University from espousing any particular religious position. This pursuit of perceived “impartiality” is the same concern that motivated Quincy and

⁴¹ Charles W. Eliot, “The Secularization of Education, Not a Rational End” unpublished address before the Unitarian Club of Boston, 1886, 11, HUA.

⁴² Eliot, “What Place,” 12.

⁴³ Charles W. Eliot, Annual Report of the President of Harvard University to the Overseers on the State of the University for the Academic Year 1878–1879, 22, HUA.

⁴⁴ Charles W. Eliot to Francis Greenwood Peabody, 20 August 1879, HUA.

⁴⁵ Charles W. Eliot, Annual Report, 1878–1879, 21.

Walker to avoid the “odium of sectarianism.” Eliot, however, advanced this pursuit by applying the same political concern to the methodology of religious scholarship, not merely the content of instruction in religion.

Eliot’s revisions did not go unnoticed, and critics labeled him a secularizer. He responded publicly by engaging in a debate with the conservative James McCosh of Princeton (an outspoken advocate of “religious education”) in 1886. Eliot insisted that functionally there were only two kinds of higher education: the “denominational” and the “undenominational.” The former, in his characterization, offered a narrow-minded indoctrination, whereas the latter pursued truth unrestrained by predetermined religious formulations. As he explained, “religious instruction of an exegetical or dogmatic character . . . cannot well be offered to its students by an undenominational college, in its programme or list of courses of instruction.”⁴⁶ McCosh responded by presenting a different model. In his estimation, the two possible kinds of education were the “religious” or the “irreligious.” The former was for him not by necessity denominational or doctrinal in any way. He wished to “inculcate religion without interfering with anyone’s conscience” by teaching religion “of a thoroughly catholic character.” He thus attacked Eliot’s ideal of the “unsectarian” college, arguing that Harvard’s practice “does not mean that they teach religion without sectarianism—which is perfectly possible, I think—but that they teach no religion at all.”⁴⁷ One word in this exchange points to the essential difference between these two presidents. McCosh still desired to “inculcate,” whereas Eliot could not tolerate the perpetuation of that old educational pattern in religion. McCosh thus suggested that for the sake of truth in advertising, Harvard should revise its signage, and “over the gates of this model university might be written, ‘All knowledge imparted here, except religious.’”⁴⁸ Eliot countered that religion could be taught as an academic subject, but no single stance was to be advocated, for the “undenominational” college “must avoid as far as possible even the appearance of partiality or injustice in religious matters.”⁴⁹

McCosh’s view was certainly the common one in that era. Eliot himself recognized this, as evidenced by the fact that, unlike McCosh, he refused to publish his half of their debate. And yet, while Eliot advocated a lonely cause in 1886, his perspective was ultimately triumphant in the American academy. Quincy, Walker, and Eliot were deliberately moving Harvard away from espousal of a theological stance. For them, the teaching of theology constituted institutional advocacy of particular theological positions. Each eschewed pursuits that could potentially give their school the “odium of sectarian partiality.” As administrators, they realized that the institutional advocacy of religious particulars carried significant political

⁴⁶ Eliot, “What Place,” 10.

⁴⁷ James McCosh, *Religion in a College: What Place it Should Have* (New York: A C Armstrong & Son, 1886) 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁹ Eliot, “What Place,” 10.

consequences. All three men deliberately distanced their school from the enterprise of theology, but only Eliot replaced it with the newly distinct academic pursuit of religion, evidenced by the establishment late in his administration of Harvard's new division of study "The History of Religions" in 1902. Here Eliot demonstrated that while Quincy and Walker were simply seeking to avoid potentially divisive content in what was taught in the College, Eliot moved beyond them to consider what new methodology in religion was appropriate for the university context. This move promoted a resurgence of the study and teaching of religion at Harvard, now under the rubric of scholarly investigation, rather than inculcation of belief.

A Measured Faith: Edwin Starbuck, William James, and the Scientific Reform of Religious Experience

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A number of recent studies have drawn attention to how the study of religion and religious seeking were intertwined in European and American cultures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ann Taves, Leigh Schmidt and Hans Kippenberg, for example, have pointed to ways that particularly Protestant anxieties and dilemmas shaped scholarly thinking about categories such as experience and “mysticism.” Scholars have been less interested, however, in the other side of the exchange—less interested, in other words, in how scholarship has reshaped religious belief and practice. The first Americans to study religion scientifically, American psychologists of religion, serve as a particularly useful illustration of how scholarly methods influenced modern ways of believing, but there is still little historical scholarship on the key figures involved. There remain few critical works, for example, on the pioneer psychologists of religion—Edwin Starbuck (1866–1947), George Coe (1862–1951), James Bissett Pratt (1875–1944), and G. Stanley Hall (1844–1924)—and their ways of studying and attempting to reform religion. The notable exception is, of course, the literature on William James, which includes an enormous number of dissertations and monographs, including several important studies examining the *Varieties of Religious Experience* and James’s other efforts to help fashion a science of religion. But even the scholarship on James does not consider how he and others used the sciences to reform religious belief and revitalize American culture. Given the fact that James identified himself as a psychologist, engaged a wide range of neurological, physiological and psychological thinkers in his work, and drew extensively on psychologists like George Coe and Edwin Starbuck, it is remarkable that these contexts have been overlooked. His debt to the psychologist Edwin Starbuck is particularly striking. In his *Varieties*, he uses

or refers to Starbuck's empirical work twenty-six times, he draws from Starbuck's questionnaire data thirty-seven times, and he mentions Starbuck by name a total of forty-six times, which is roughly the equivalent of once in every six pages of text.¹

Pointing to the ways that scholarship and religious seeking often have been entangled in the history of the study of religion, I argue here that early American psychologists of religion initiated their studies in order to reform concepts of religious experience and make religious belief possible again for themselves and other modern intellectuals. In order to understand precisely how this happened, I turn to the life and work of Edwin Starbuck, a pioneer psychologist of religion whose life illuminates well the preoccupations and struggles of many first-generation American psychologists of religion. Like other psychologists of religion, Starbuck experienced an adolescent conversion that initiated a lifelong interest in the subject. He spent the remainder of his career collecting first-hand accounts of Protestant conversions and arranging and correlating their different dimensions—all because he hoped this work might eliminate local and inessential elements from definitions of (true) religious experience, separate healthy from unhealthy types of religion, and establish a range of legitimate religious thought and action. He was sure that applying scientific methods to the deepest religious experiences—probing and sorting them and studying the “laws” of their growth—would make these deep parts of the self less mysterious. “But to lift [experience] above superstition, to dwell vitally within it, to make it a sure, lasting growing possession of mankind,” Starbuck insisted in his 1898 study of religious experience, “it must have a thousand

¹ Half a century ago David Bremer noted the “deficiency of historical study in the psychology of religion” and called for new, serious studies of the pioneers in the field—but his call, according to Howard Booth, was ignored. See David Henry Bremer, “George Albert Coe’s Contribution to the Psychology of Religion” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1949) 7; and John Howard Booth, “Edwin Diller Starbuck: Pioneer in the Psychology of Religion” (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1972) 1. Other than James, the only major figure in the psychology of religion to attract attention has been the founder of American psychology and its driving force, G. Stanley Hall. Unfortunately, the only scholarly biography of Hall mentions very briefly Hall’s strong religious feelings and his key role in the psychology of religion. The author, Dorothy Ross, regretted the omission and anticipated disappointment among historians of religion who might have expected “an analysis of the institutional and doctrinal context of American Protestantism to which Hall’s mature psychology of religion was directed” (Dorothy Ross, *G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972] xvi). One recent work that does succeed in putting psychologists of religion in larger contexts is Ann Taves’s *Fits, Trances and Visions*, a book to which I am much indebted and one that devotes at least one chapter to how these thinkers explained religious experiences and attempted to reform them. Examining the contributions of James and Coe in particular, Taves argued that psychologists of religion embraced the subconscious as a crucial mediating category and developed this category into an important analytical tool in the study of religion. Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) 253–307. See also Leigh Schmidt, “The Making of Modern Mysticism,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 71 (2003) 273–302; and Hans Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

thought-paths leading into its holy of holies.”² The psychology of religion was Starbuck’s “thought-path” to the deep, inner parts of the religious life; and as this science cleared its way to the core of the religious self, it cut away and demolished obscuring superstitions, old theological notions, and narrow conceptions of faith. “A multitude of superstitions and crudities are doomed to fold their tents,” Starbuck rejoiced in a 1902 letter to William James. “People will be living in a new era of religious experience before they know it.”³ Starbuck tirelessly promoted the empirical study of religion not just as a new form of knowledge, but as an essential method for fashioning better and healthier ways of thinking about and practicing religion. His life illustrates clearly that scientific studies and methods created new opportunities for religious ways of being in the world.

■ First-Hand Experiences

Like many other psychologists of religion, Starbuck’s interest in religious experience began with a youthful evangelical conversion that he later regarded with dismay, puzzlement, and, occasionally, nostalgia. At first this conversion seemed like a powerful and genuine event; but it was not long before he wondered if social pressures and contagious religious excitements might have produced it. Perhaps the whole episode was contrived and meaningless. “In the heat of the revival at Centre meetings I went through the forms of this public acceptance,” he remembered, “not feeling at the moment the negative implication that my heart had not been on the whole ‘given to the Lord,’ during the preceding months.”⁴ Raised in a sober Quaker family, Starbuck had tried hard to approximate the rhythms of evangelical conversion, rhythms that, when they worked, propelled people from a deep conviction of sin to a joyousness that signaled freedom from it. But Starbuck never convinced himself that he was wholly sinful, and the public profession of faith that he mustered was, as a result, half-hearted. Still, there was enough in this experience—enough spiritual relief and emotional power—to make Starbuck wonder about it. Was it possible that such dramatic experiences were authentic or useful in any way? If so, why were these deep, invigorating emotions packaged in such unseemly and unnatural forms, forms such as ecstatic revival behaviors? Would it be possible somehow to separate the vitality and the intensity of these experiences from their unseemly contexts and thus recover something of their spiritual power for modern believers? Starbuck was not the only one interested in such questions. Other early psychologists of religion, such as George Coe and

² Edwin Diller Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Study of the Growth of Religious Consciousness* (London: Walter Scott, 1900) 10.

³ Edwin Diller Starbuck to William James, 23 August 1902, William James Papers, Houghton Library.

⁴ Edwin Starbuck, “Religion’s Use of Me,” in *Religion in Transition* (ed. Virgilius Ferm; New York: Macmillan Co., 1937; repr. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969) 215.

James Leuba, pursued answers to these questions with an intensity that originated in their own puzzling, failed conversions.

When Starbuck enrolled at Harvard Divinity School in 1893 he was still wondering how best to account for evangelical experiences and perhaps recover something of value from them. He later recalled that when he started at Harvard his:

central guiding principle was that [his course of] study must deal *primarily with the first-hand religious experience of individuals*, not so much with their *theories* about religion as with their actual *experiences*.⁵

Theories about religion, he was sure, were “once removed from the vital springs of conduct and valuation”; historical records and sociological statements about religion were “thrice removed, and consist for all we know of only congealed, discoloured, and distorted semblances of real experience. One must,” Starbuck insisted, modifying Emerson, “catch at first hand the feelings of spirituality.”⁶ But how? How might one catch at first hand these unmediated spiritual impulses? What tool could one use? At some point Starbuck decided to investigate these elusive facts in questionnaires that asked for details about “the feelings of divine presence,” “actual feelings of the sense of communion during the ceremony of communion” and, above all, what people experienced during conversion episodes.⁷ He fashioned questions carefully, hoping, he said, to “awaken” his respondents in certain ways, trying to elicit their immediate reactions. He thought that “what came forth spontaneously would be the most vital and essential elements of the experience,” deep inner particulars that were closer to “the operation of life-forces.”⁸ In many ways, this was a typical goal of late nineteenth-century religious liberals: separate the essential inner aspects of religious experience from their less important, outer manifestations. He was the first to use the questionnaire to probe these kinds of religious experiences.⁹

At first, talking to friends and acquaintances about their religious experiences seemed like a good beginning; but in time Starbuck regretted trying to study scientifically the inner lives of associates and fellow graduate students. When he distributed questionnaires to contacts in Cambridge and surrounding areas many thought his surveys were rude and intrusive. (See the very first questionnaire reproduced in figure 1). Although Starbuck intended these questionnaires as ways of understanding and fostering the deepest and most essential parts of the religious self, some saw them as cold, scientific instruments likely to eviscerate, not energize,

⁵ *Ibid.*, 222–23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 12–13.

⁹ Another pioneer in the psychology of religion, a Swiss-born graduate student at Clark University named James Leuba, conducted empirical studies—questionnaires and interviews—of religious experience and published his studies the year before Starbuck (in 1896). But Starbuck initiated his work at Harvard first. See Booth, “Edwin Diller Starbuck,” 40–41.

their spiritual capacities. When Starbuck's mentor William James got a copy of the survey he was full of hesitation. "This is New England," he warned, and "people here will not reply to an inquisitional document of that sort."¹⁰ Starbuck assured James that his plan would work. "I wheedle them; I explain that this is the beginning of a new science in the world—the psychology of religion, and we must have the facts."¹¹ But at least initially, James appeared to be right. Starbuck received several letters of complaint and recrimination. There were a number of people who did not share Starbuck's enthusiasm for this new science, and many more who were positively worried about trying to study empirically the facts of the spiritual life. Was this not just reducing mysterious, spiritual things to natural laws? Even the religious liberal and reformer Thomas Wentworth Higginson complained to James that Starbuck's questionnaire amounted to "moral and spiritual vivisection." He asked James if his approving signature was a forgery.¹² Things got worse when Starbuck presented his findings to C. C. Everett's philosophy of religion class. In this setting, which was normally quite collegial, anxious students assaulted him with objections—and one of them, Edward Borncamp, standing erect and with

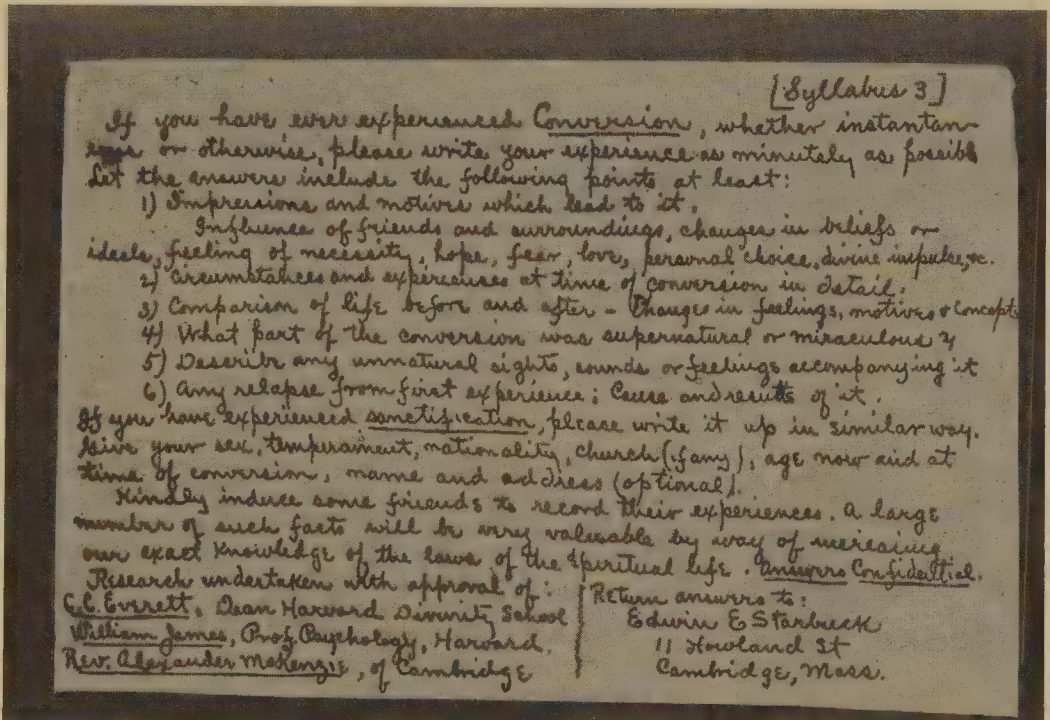


Fig. 1 "Moral and spiritual vivisection" Starbuck attempted to dissect America's spiritual life with this, his first conversion survey, from Edwin D. Starbuck, "Religion's Use of Me," 1937. Reprinted with permission of Ayer Company Publishers

¹⁰ Edwin Starbuck, "A Student's Impressions of James in the Middle '90s," *Psychological Review* 50 (1943) 129

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Starbuck, "Religion's Use of Me," 225.

face “white with emotion,” cried “It’s all a lie!” And all of this took place at liberal Harvard Divinity School.¹³



Fig. 2 The Harvard Divinity School Class of 1895. Harvard Divinity School, Photograph Collection bMS445, Andover-Harvard Theological Library. Starbuck is the first person in the top row, far left; Anna Diller, his future wife, and one of the first women at HDS, is standing top row, seventh from the left; C. C. Everett sits just in front and to the left of Diller; Edward Borncamp, in a calmer mood, reclines with his hat in the third row, far left.

Eventually Starbuck produced two articles on religious experience that he subsequently included in a book entitled *The Psychology of Religion* and published in London in 1898. His was the first full-length book by an American psychologist of religion.¹⁴ Although the book speaks generically about “religion” and “religious experience” it really attempts to measure and account for only one kind of

¹³ Ibid., 226.

¹⁴ His two articles were “A Study of Conversion,” *American Journal of Psychology* 8 (1897) 268–308 and “Contributions to the Psychology of Religion,” *American Journal of Psychology* 9 (1897–1898) 70–124. Starbuck’s book was the first in the genre, and his articles were the most ambitious quantitative studies done before 1900. There were, however, other scholars working along the same lines, especially those interested in relating conversion to life-cycle stages. All of them were associated with G. Stanley Hall at Clark University. The very earliest studies were: G. Stanley Hall, “The Moral and Religious Training of Children,” *Princeton Review* 9 (1882) 26–45; A. H. Daniels, “The New Life: A Study in Regeneration,” *American Journal of Psychology* 6 (1895) 61–103; and J. H. Leuba, “The Psychology of Religious Phenomena,” *American Journal of Psychology* 7 (1896) 309–385. Leuba’s study was the most quantitative.

experience—evangelical conversion. Starbuck's personal reasons for focusing on evangelicalism are clear enough; but he also had intellectual reasons for doing so, for he knew enough about the emerging science of religions to see that American evangelicals, with their uncontrollable fits and holy convulsions, manifested those primitive religious elements that European scholars were studying in aboriginal ceremonies. Starbuck regarded American evangelical conversion as a stand-in category for all ecstatic behaviors, calling it "the most dramatic single storm-centre of religious experience," an event swirling with instincts and primal emotions.¹⁵ Like European counterparts, Americans intellectuals like Starbuck wondered if these and other odd manifestations of the primitive could somehow be harvested for use in the over-civilized, modern world.

Starbuck found data for his study not in urban America but on the rough-and-tumble frontier—and in the gesticulating shapes, mostly, of American Methodists. His 1898 book is full of rowdy Methodist emotions and testimonials, which he does his best to transform into disembodied statistics. In part one of the book he used different questionnaires. The first yielded 192 responses (120 women; 72 men) from Protestant Christians across the United States, with Methodists in the majority. He supplemented this questionnaire with more focused surveys on conversion and life-cycle stages. These surveys were distributed in three locations: 1) a Women's Christian Temperance Union meeting in California (mostly Methodists), 2) two regiments of soldiers from Iowa and Tennessee, then stationed in San Francisco, and 3) a handful of participants in a Methodist conference in Santa Barbara, California.

Starbuck also used data on ages of conversion from the alumni records of Drew Theological Seminary (again, Methodist). In part one of the book Starbuck identified the emotions that initiated and accompanied conversion, linked conversion styles to different temperamental and biological types, and, challenging a number of other important psychological studies, suggested ways that conversion moments might help young people mature. In part two of the book he identified another model of religious development, the "gradual-growth" model, which seemed more common among intellectuals. Denominations were more evenly represented in this gradual-growth group, and the majority of respondents were college educated.¹⁶ This fact was not lost on Starbuck or other psychologists of religion. Were educated people less likely to have an evangelical-style conversion?

The striking feature of Starbuck's book is its imposing apparatus of measurement, which Starbuck used essentially to make religious experiences more orderly and comprehensible. There are no less than thirty-two figures in the book—remarkable

¹⁵ Starbuck, "Religion's Use of Me," 223.

¹⁶ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 25–27, 186. There were several prominent social scientists who argued that conversions and other religious states were unhealthy, including the well-known French pundit Gustav Le Bon and the American psychologist Boris Sidis. Starbuck quarrels with Sidis and others in *Psychology of Religion*, 163–79.

charts on religious development; graphs correlating conversion with age, gender, body growth, emotion and temperament; tables measuring the frequency of post-conversion anxiety, religious doubt and the intensity of certain beliefs. Starbuck was mapping inner vectors of doubt and depravity, anxiety and ecstasy, taking inventory of mysterious mental things that had confounded him. He found that there were many ways to use empirical methods to bring “a little coherency and constancy into the midst of that which is constantly flowing”—many ways, he said in different contexts, to use science to “make it possible to comprehend new regions in the spiritual life of man.”¹⁷ Scientific study revealed how spiritual development worked by reducing the astonishing variety of American evangelical experiences, with all of their somatic and emotional variations, to a set of orderly laws and patterns. For Starbuck, this procedure yielded some crucial gains. It had the effect of making the divine force behind religious experiences not a terrifying and unpredictable agent of sudden conversion events but an architect of an orderly universe who might be admired and understood better by plotting his earthly irruptions and manifestations in scientific tables and charts. This was the religious world that Starbuck wanted to live in, a world in which God acted in predictable ways and human beings sensed his immanent presence in nature’s laws.

Starbuck’s ways of ordering and correlating experiences led to other key spiritual discoveries. While analyzing the laws and general features of evangelical experiences he and another early psychologist of religion named George Coe, a Methodist who also had failed to experience evangelical conversion, stumbled upon the answer to a question that had long troubled them—why some people wanted and tried to have dramatic conversions but could not. The answer had to do with temperament. Different personality styles predisposed people to one or another kind of religious development. “Where expectation [of conversion] is satisfied” in dramatic experiences, Starbuck explained, “there sensibility is distinctly predominant; but where expectation is disappointed, there intellect is just as distinctly predominant.”¹⁸ Those who scored high in sensibility (feeling), and those who were more susceptible to social pressures or were introverted, were more likely to experience dramatic conversions. Intellectuals on the other hand, including psychologists, usually were “Intellect Predominant.” Starbuck borrowed a table from Coe’s then-unpublished manuscript to illustrate the differences between personality types (fig. 3).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10, 6–7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

RELATION OF STRIKING TRANSFORMATION TO
TEMPERAMENT.

Classification According to the Three Faculties.	Sensibility Predom- inant.	Intellect Predom- inant.	Will Predom- inant.
GROUP I.—17 persons who expected a trans- formation and experienced it.....	12	2	3
GROUP II.—12 who expected but did not experience	2	9	1
GROUP III.—5 others who belong to both the above classes.....	2	2	1

Classification According to the Four Temperaments.	Sanguine (Prompt-Weak).	Melancholic (Slow-Intense).	Choleric (Prompt-Intense).	Phlegmatic (Slow-Weak).
GROUP I.....	8	6	1	2
GROUP II.....	2	3	7	

Fig. 3 Correlating temperament and susceptibility to evangelical conversion.
From George Coe, *The Spiritual Life*, 1900.

Other surveys confirmed that more educated Americans were less susceptible to evangelical forms of religious instruction. This did not mean, however, that young intellectuals did not go through periods of religious conversion, crisis, or adjustment. Such periods were the *sine qua non* of adolescence. It merely meant that different people had different ways of navigating developmental milestones in this period. Some proceeded gradually.¹⁹

Starbuck used categories such as natural/unnatural to structure his data and make a number of normative claims about experience. There was a natural, and thus good and useful, essence to experience; and there were unnatural, and thus bad and harmful, outer behaviors that accompanied religious experiences. Dramatic and sudden evangelical conversion experiences usually were associated with the latter category—they were excessively irrational and potentially harmful—and Starbuck knew personally that they created anxieties and emotional difficulties when foisted inappropriately upon young people. Starbuck advised:

The fatality of impressing the fact of sin and personal unworthiness, of hold-
ing out before the adolescent . . . the horrors of eternal punishment, and of

¹⁹ On liberal conversion failures see William Hutchison, "Cultural Strain and Protestant Liberalism," *American Historical Review* 76 (1971) 410. See also George Coe, *The Spiritual Life: Studies in the Science of Religion* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1900) 120. The agnostic psychologist of religion James Leuba is well known for his efforts to document how education militated against evangelical beliefs. For a summary of his work see David M. Wulff, "James Henry Leuba: A Reassessment of a Swiss-American Pioneer," in *Aspects in Contexts: Studies in the History of Psychology of Religion* (ed. Jacob Belzen; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994) 25–44. See also Booth, "Edwin Diller Starbuck," 8. For more on Coe, Starbuck and other liberals who studied experience see Christopher White, *Unsettled Minds: Psychology and the American Search for Spiritual Assurance, 1830–1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

emphasizing unduly the ideal of perfection, instead of stimulating the halting and self-distrustful soul toward wholesome activity—these and numerous other indiscretions which are so frequently indulged in need only be seen to be avoided.²⁰

Starbuck could show empirically that excessive emotions stirred up at revivals led to psychological deficiencies, religious morbidity, and immoral behavior. He was seconded by liberal Christian psychologists such as George Cutten, who showed empirically that converts who experienced hot, evangelical experiences were less sophisticated in handling moral questions and less likely to remain believers over the long term.²¹ Such empirical conclusions could be buttressed as well by already-existing certainties about race. Starbuck and many others developed ways to measure and correlate personality dimensions such as credulity and belief and they found these personality traits in abundance in African Americans, Native Americans, and other “primitive” peoples. Starbuck hoped that fewer and fewer people, including especially non-white Americans, would fall for the excessively emotional techniques fabricated by roaming evangelicals.²²

There was, however, a deep ambivalence in all of Starbuck’s work, for although he thought of evangelicalism as an excessive and harmful way of stimulating the religious self, there was no denying that evangelical conversions were energizing and powerful. Starbuck had seen how evangelical experiences helped young people develop powerful religious identities in a very short time. They appeared to catalyze psychological and spiritual growth.

Granting that the highest consciousness is conditioned by the most highly and perfectly organized nervous system; that new ideas imply the functioning of new areas in the nervous system; that the nerve elements that are concerned in spiritual insight are already formed and lying ready to function, if only brought into the right coordination, it is conceivable that during the intense experiences attending conversion, under the heat of the emotional pressure brought to bear, a harmony is struck among these elements which it might have taken months, or even years, to accomplish.²³

In this passage and in others Starbuck wondered about the emotional power of evangelical conversion and discussed its ways of energizing human emotional and spiritual capacities. Conversion experiences were important, then, as long as they were not excessive and as long as they were understood in wider developmental contexts. The trick was understanding the useful parts of these experiences and separating them from everything else. This was Starbuck’s dilemma: How

²⁰ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 231.

²¹ George B. Cutten, *The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1908) 4, 171–73, 165. See also Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 167–168.

²² For more on how commonly held opinions on race and gender shaped psychological views on religious experience see White, *Unsettled Minds*, chs 4 and 5.

²³ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 406.

would he and other psychologists recover some of the primitive intensity from phenomena that, at least on the surface, were so deeply unappealing? This was the same dilemma being wrestled with by one of Starbuck's mentors at Harvard, an established philosopher and psychologist also getting interested in empirical studies of religion—William James.

■ Measuring Faith

At first, James appeared not to have appreciated Starbuck's attempts to count, categorize and measure conversion experiences. When Starbuck began his empirical work, James was chary. The "question-circular method of collecting information had already . . . reached the proportions of an incipient nuisance," he remembered telling Starbuck.²⁴ He expected Starbuck's questions to add nothing significant to the problems of religious experience, eliciting conventional responses couched in familiar Protestant idioms. But James later admitted that he was mistaken. Respondents testified to a range of interesting awakenings and mystical experiences. Their reports were candid and their language seemed genuine. On a trip to the American west coast James visited Starbuck, then teaching at the newly-founded Stanford University, and wrote Alice that he was reading eagerly Starbuck's questionnaire data. The data surprised him.

Some of them are *köstlich* [marvelous], and they all give one a splendid feeling of there being such good people in the world. How I *have* wisht, dear Alice, that you might be reading them aloud to me. I know that you would enjoy them as much as I.²⁵

James's letter is reminiscent of another on the same subject written just after his father's death in 1882, in which he playfully told Alice she had "one new function hereafter"—namely:

you must not leave me till I understand a little more of the value and meaning of religion in Father's sense, in the mental life and destiny of man. . . . I as his son (if for no other reason) must help it to its rights in their eyes. And for that reason I must learn to interpret it aright as I have never done, and you must help me.²⁶

When James read Starbuck's conversion narratives, this moment appears to have arrived. On subsequent occasions James asked Starbuck for more, and he drew from Starbuck's collection extensively in his *Varieties*, as I have already noted.²⁷ Starbuck's work was a key source for James's book.

²⁴ See James's preface to Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*, vii.

²⁵ James to Alice Howe Gibbens James, 10 September 1898, William James Papers.

²⁶ James to Alice Howe Gibbens James, quoted in Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* (2 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1935) 2:323.

²⁷ See also William James to Edwin Diller Starbuck, 30 September 1898, William James Papers. Unfortunately, Starbuck's questionnaire data have been lost or destroyed. James thought Starbuck's

Of course, using empirical methods to reform religion was something James had pondered for a number of years. He had been trained in medicine and physiology and in the late 1870s he collaborated with another young psychologist named G. Stanley Hall on a series of arguments for an empirical reform of philosophy, a transformation of philosophy along psychological and physiological lines. They made their argument in a couple of articles in the progressive reformist periodical, *The Nation*. Their ideas were in line with the ideas of other reforming social scientists. They argued that without induction and empirical methods, philosophy and religious reflection would remain mired in inconclusive, metaphysical speculations. Religion—and Christianity in particular—was in a bad state. Years later, in 1884, James was still wondering “whether there can be any popular religion raised on the ruins of the old Christianity without the presence of . . . a belief in new *physical* facts and possibilities. Abstract considerations about the soul and the reality of a moral order will not do in a year what the glimpse into a world of new phenomenal possibilities enveloping those of the present life, afforded by an extension of our insight into the order of nature, would do in an instant.”²⁸ But actually using the methods of science to answer specifically religious questions, and thus produce a science of religions, does not seem to have occurred to James until the middle of the 1890s. It was at this time that he encountered new facts collected by psychical researchers, scholars of religion such as E. B. Tylor and Max Müller and psychologists of religion like G. Stanley Hall and Starbuck.²⁹

It is not surprising then, that James was intrigued both by Starbuck’s raw questionnaire data and how Starbuck sifted and evaluated these data. But why did reading through Starbuck’s accounts of religious experience give James hope and that “splendid feeling”? And why did James incorporate Starbuck’s data without adornment and in such detail in the *Varieties*?

The answer has something to do with an ambivalence at the heart of James’s work and the work of other psychologists of religion. The more they successfully cast religious phenomena into scientific formulas, the more they complained about being alienated from the deepest and most vital parts of human life. (This was a regular complaint among first-generation social scientists as well, going back to John Stuart Mill.) The psychologist G. Stanley Hall gave voice to this commonly-felt anxiety when he worried that “in our day . . . the hot life of feelings is remote

work was important and he recommended it to other philosophers and psychologists. See, e.g., William James to James McKeen Cattell, 10 June 1903 in *William James: Selected Unpublished Correspondence, 1885–1910* (ed. Frederick J. Down Scott; Columbus: Ohio State University) 312–13.

²⁸ Quoted in Perry, *William James* 2:327. James and Hall wrote two separate pieces for one issue of *The Nation* that were printed back-to-back. See William James, “The Teaching of Philosophy in our Colleges,” *The Nation* 23 (1876) 178–79 and G. Stanley Hall, “College Instruction in Philosophy,” *The Nation* 23 (1876) 180.

²⁹ See Henry Samuel Levinson, *The Religious Investigations of William James* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981) 73–76.

and decadent. Culture represses, and intellect saps its root. The very word passion is becoming obsolete.”³⁰ Hence the appeal of Starbuck’s narratives of deep, even primitive religious emotions: These were glimpses into the deepest parts of the self, hot emotions and sensations unmediated by cognition or culture. These emotions were a tonic for enervating, over-civilized lifestyles. And they represented the parts of the self that James, in particular, had trouble accessing.

Although James’s yearning for the comforts of faith contributed to his interest in these experiences, this was only part of the reason he wanted to expand his inner life. The inner life, and especially the feelings, registered most accurately our perceptions of the (physical and metaphysical) world—and they determined most powerfully our personal qualities, inclinations and abilities. Starbuck once explained

The mechanism of the affective life consists of all the senses in so far as they respond to stimuli that do not admit of discrete handling, the nerve endings in skin, intestines, blood vessels, glands, muscles and joints, the sympathetic nervous system with all its ramifications, and perhaps, also, structures in the central nervous system corresponding to the ‘association centers.’ The affective life thus involves all the organic reactions in vaso-motor response, circulatory and glandular tone, vascular tension and the like, which experimentation is showing to be the immediate and ever present accompaniment of all sensation.³¹

The “feeling life,” Starbuck continued, “draws *directly* from experience, and not through the mediation of the cognitive processes; that is, it is itself a source of knowledge.”³² The immediate bodily feeling was constitutive of every mental act; it was the foundation for thinking, believing, reasoning, and forming opinions. Religious wisdom, then, was “direct and immediate,” and reports of experience should not be “blurred and distorted by an over-degree of rationality.”³³

Starbuck learned these facts about sensation and perception from James himself, who, when preparing to write his own psychological study of religious experience, worried that the act of doing so might obscure the part of the self that he was most interested in understanding—the “less articulate and more profound part of our nature.”³⁴ He gave his *Varieties* a descriptive quality in order to present the experiences without discussion or philosophizing. He was merely displaying these experiences, hoping, as Starbuck had, that they might elicit emotional responses or somehow give off traces of intensity. For me, James told another psychologist of religion, the divine is “limited to abstract concepts which, as ideals, interest

³⁰ Hall is quoted in Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 95.

³¹ Edwin Diller Starbuck, “The Feelings and their Place in Religion,” *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* 1 (1904) 183–85.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.* See also Edwin Diller Starbuck, “Reinforcement to the Pulpit from Modern Psychology: IV. As a Man Thinketh in His Heart,” *Homiletic Review* 54 (1908) 23.

³⁴ Quoted in Perry, *William James* 2:327–28.

and determine me, but do so but faintly, in comparison with what a feeling of God might effect, if I had one. It is largely a question of intensity, but differences of intensity may make one's whole centre of energy shift."³⁵ Although he could not muster what he called a "living sense of commerce with a God" he knew enough to "envy those who have, for I know that the addition of such a sense would help me immensely."³⁶ The religious experiences Starbuck collected offered him vicarious satisfactions.

James also appears to have been interested in how Starbuck used statistical methods to understand the value of conversions and related phenomena. In his preface to Starbuck's book he commented on this. It was "Dr. Starbuck's express aim to disengage the general from the specific and local in his critical discussion, and to reduce the reports to their most universal psychological value," James wrote. "It seems to me that here the statistical method has held its own, and that its percentages and averages have proved to possess genuine significance."³⁷ James did not explain what he meant and we are thus left wondering why he thought the "statistical method" was so significant. We also are left wondering why an intellectual so protective of individualism and metaphysical open-endedness was endorsing a scientific program that reduced the "specific and local" to universal patterns. On one level, certainly, his support of this kind of project seems odd.

But at just this moment (1898–1899) James had another, more urgent difficulty to overcome, one that Starbuck's techniques helped him solve. A year or so after Starbuck published his book, James wrote to a friend that the "well-nigh impossible" task he was pondering for his upcoming Gifford lectures was first to defend experience as "the real backbone of the world's religious life—I mean prayer, guidance, and all that sort of thing immediately and privately felt" and, second, "to make the hearer or reader believe, what I myself invincibly do believe, that, although all the special manifestations of religion may have been absurd (I mean its creeds and theories), yet the life of it as a whole is mankind's most important function."³⁸ James and Starbuck thought about this dilemma at the same time: How could religious experiences in general be promoted without authorizing the many particular and absurd manifestations of them?

Starbuck's statistical generalizations (and accompanying tables) solved James's problem perfectly. They sundered religious experiences from their inessential contexts and showed how they functioned generally to adjust people to new life-cycle stages. Starbuck's statistics lifted the "universal psychological value" out

³⁵ William James to James Henry Leuba, 17 April 1904, in *Letters of William James* (ed. Henry James; 2 vols.; Boston: Atlantic Monthly, 1920) 2:211–12.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ See James's preface to Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, viii–ix.

³⁸ William James to Frances R. Morse, 12 April 1900 in *Letters*, 2:127. In the preface to Starbuck's book James recognized that Starbuck's examples were drawn from one very particular source—namely, American evangelicalism. Yet James also suspected that these experiences pointed to universal religious proclivities. See Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, x.

of the idiosyncratic questionnaire data. For different reasons, including James's growing impatience with experimental work, he did not ape Starbuck's methods in his book; but he did borrow the categories Starbuck had so carefully described and helped shape, categories like *conversion*. He also shared with Starbuck a sense that displaying these experiences and sorting through their essential characteristics would help modern believers recover what was essential in religious experiences and ignore the rest.

■ Religious Feelings and Intuitions

The rest of Starbuck's life is a story about how scientific discourses reshaped not just ideas about religious experience but also how experience was practiced and exchanged in American religious cultures. Of all psychologists of religion, Starbuck made the case most vigorously that religious experiences, once shorn of their unseemly elements, proved that God existed and that belief was psychologically useful and true.

Starbuck did not wait long before turning from scientific studies to arguments that his data revealed new ways of perceiving and believing in God. Soon after publishing his study on conversion experiences he wrote an article that attempted to show that the varied data of religious experience suggested the existence of God. Pointing out that religion was concerned above all with "the affective life" and expressing the common functionalist view that religious feelings, like other feelings and instincts, adjusted human beings to larger realities encompassing them, Starbuck argued that human feeling "gives us as valid an account of external facts and relations, truth and reality, as the cognitive [life]." He reasoned that 1) because religious feelings were universal, and 2) because most other inner dispositions can be relied upon for true knowledge about the world, that therefore 3) religious feelings point to the existence of an objective spiritual reality impinging upon us. Feelings, he argued, were "never purely subjective"; they always pointed to nonsubjective realities outside of the self. Thus, study of the feelings allowed us to probe the edges of a larger universe of relations.³⁹ (Starbuck was not alone in wondering about these questions. Many psychologists at the time were concerned with precisely these issues, examining in particular how the physiology of sensation and perception pointed to links between subjective states and outer, objective things.) Starbuck was more inclined than most to transform these kinds of arguments into theistic proofs, perhaps because he himself had experienced a number of mysterious religious experiences and intuitions. His half-hearted evangelical conversion was merely the beginning; later in life he had several other powerful religious "illuminations,"

³⁹ Edwin Starbuck, "The Feelings and their Place in Religion," *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* 1 (1904) 175; see also Edwin Diller Starbuck, "The Intimate Senses as Sources of Wisdom," *The Journal of Religion* 1 (1921) 129–45.

and he never lost that part of his personality that he once called his “ineradicable mysticism.”⁴⁰

As is well known, James had similar suspicions about the existence of a spiritual dimension, but he settled for a tentative assessment of the problem in a section of the *Varieties* on his “over-beliefs.” In private, however, he encouraged Starbuck. In August 1904 he wrote that “I can see but vaguely just what sort of outer relations our inner organism might respond to, which our feelings and intellect interpret by religious thought.”⁴¹ When Starbuck’s article came out later that year he told Starbuck his thesis “in this article is both important and original, and ought to be worked out in the clearest possible manner” and “as concretely as possible.” It was a difficult argument to make convincingly, James admitted; “the real crux” of it “is when you come to define objectively the ideals to which the feeling reacts. ‘God is a Spirit’ — *darauf geht es an* — on the last available definition of the term Spirit. It may be very abstract.”⁴² The God of scientific believers like Starbuck was abstract indeed; but all other possible gods, including especially those imagined by more conventional American Christians, were accessible only by believing in preposterous doctrines or performing unseemly and irrational worship exercises.

There was a lot at stake in these arguments. Anxious that the Bible’s authority had been undermined by both biblical critics and scientific accounts of time and history, American intellectuals turned expectantly to experience as a new, self-certifying foundation for belief. Starbuck insisted that religious experience, shorn of its distortions and excesses, injected life-giving elements into the self. Other believing psychologists made similar arguments. “The cold, half-dying belief of the intellect is often warmed into life by getting into touch with the vital forces of the feeling background, and once so vivified and identified with the deepest currents of one’s life, is seldom thereafter subject to doubt or assailable by argument,” the psychologist James Pratt wrote.⁴³ The only satisfactory foundation for modern faith was this — religious feeling. The same medicine could heal the skepticism of troubled believers too. Many people of culture and intellectual power, Pratt wrote in another context, describing perfectly his own situation, although “unable to subscribe to any creed or even to worship with any church, yet find springing up within them a stream of inarticulate but genuine religious experience and intuition which is to them the very water of life.”⁴⁴ Pratt had seen Starbuck’s data and James’s *Varieties* and was impressed that people who had had religious experiences seemed to be more faithful and certain. Referring to one of the religious (but post-Christian) subjects

⁴⁰ Starbuck, “Religion’s Use of Me,” 204, 219.

⁴¹ William James to Edwin Diller Starbuck, 24 August 1904 in *Letters* 2:209–10.

⁴² William James to Edwin Diller Starbuck, 12 February 1905, William James Papers. Others, like the philosopher William Hocking and psychologists of religion such as James B. Pratt, also pointed to experience as evidence that God existed. See Bruce Kuklick, *The Rise of American Philosophy: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1860–1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) 484–86.

⁴³ James Bissett Pratt, *The Psychology of Religious Belief* (New York: Macmillan, 1907) 228.

⁴⁴ James Bissett Pratt, “The Psychology of Religion,” *Harvard Theological Review* 1 (1908) 452.

he dealt with in his own studies, Pratt remembered that this believer, like so many others, insisted that the moment of religious experience itself was “enough to live by.” “It is a part of my being, and has for the rest of my being an importance and a value that are supreme, and that suffices me,” this believer confessed.⁴⁵ The task for psychologists of religion, Pratt thought, was to study and classify all religious data and use that information to help ordinary believers understand religious experiences better and incorporate them in their lives.⁴⁶

There were a number of ways to do this. In popular lectures and articles in religious periodicals, Pratt, Starbuck and others persuaded American believers that psychological studies of experience were refining religiousness and helping people believe in stronger and more healthy ways.

The experience of each and every earnest person is original and genuine, and one that others should share, and one that heightens our conception of what are the possibilities of the spiritual life. It is like the exchange of experiences among trusted friends, or the confessions that people make, or the testimonies that they give in prayer-meeting, except on a larger scale.⁴⁷

Psychological studies of religion produced a new large-scale discursive “prayer-meeting,” a new economy of religious experiences in which personal religious feelings and illuminations were exchanged and discussed. This dramatically changed the nature of experience and how it was disciplined; experience became a discourse shaped less by pastors and Christian symbols and more by statistical generalizations across cultures formulated by psychologists and educators. Believers always shared stories about faith, Starbuck wrote in a popular magazine for pastors, but now this process would lead to an “ability to discriminate among the qualities of spiritual experience.” Comparisons of different religious experiences and their outcomes might reveal which experiences were most functional, useful and healthy. With scientific study “we can know enough to feel that we are not wandering entirely in the dark”; we can “be helpful to the hungering of an inquiring soul”; and we can understand and use different methods to move individuals through processes of religious development.⁴⁸ One method—the older, evangelical way in particular—did not fit everyone; different temperaments called for different methods.

The transformation in American thinking about religious experience that Starbuck and a few others promoted was far-reaching. Many embraced Starbuck’s way of thinking about the two types of conversion—sudden and gradual—and a surprising number agreed that gradual, natural ways of nurturing young people’s religious feelings were best. Starbuck’s charts and graphs of spiritual growth, and

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ James Bissett Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness: A Psychological Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1924) 479, 228–29, 474.

⁴⁷ Edwin Diller Starbuck, “The Scientific Study of Religion,” *Homiletic Review* 49 (1903) 102.

⁴⁸ Starbuck, “The Scientific Study of Religion,” 102–3.

the charts and graphs of other psychologists, found their way into a large number of popular devotional manuals. One pamphlet reproduced a chart on conversion ages and informed pastors that psychologists now agreed that there were propitious times to encourage conversion or “Decision Day” (see figure 4).

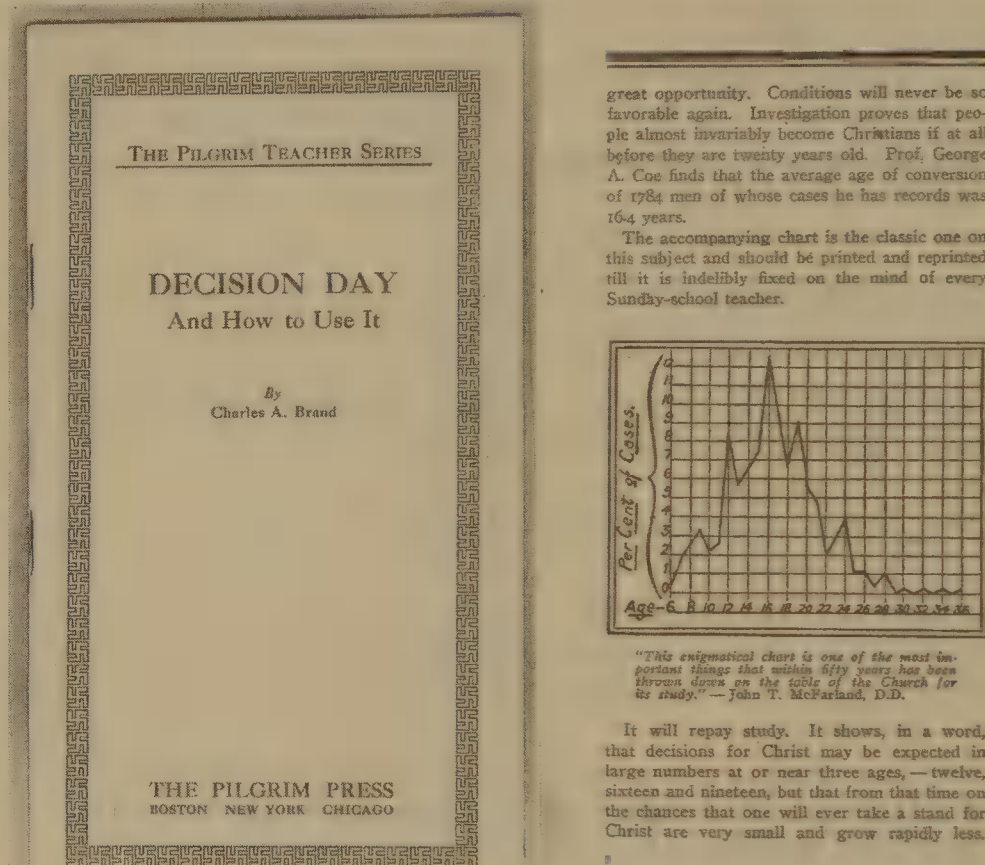


Fig. 4 Pamphlet promoting scientific ways of thinking about religious conversion. From Charles A. Brand, *Decision Day and How to Use It*, 1908.

It was important to guide adolescent Sunday school children (between the ages of 14–18) in particular; this was the time when “the physical nature and the religious nature are in a strange state of turmoil and incompleteness,” when the young person had a “longing for something higher and better. . . . Conditions will never be so favorable again.”⁴⁹ Here, psychological insights added urgency to pastoral labors: there was a small window for conversion opportunities. And of course psychological insights also reinforced how important conversion experiences were for overall maturity. Still, while youthful conversions were important, those borrowing from psychological experts agreed that it was never necessary to revert to the “old plan”—to use God’s wrath or fearful doctrines to motivate Christians. This might

⁴⁹ Charles A. Brand, *Decision Day and How to Use It* (Boston: Pilgrim, 1908) 6–7. From the George Albert Coe Papers, Yale Divinity School Archives, New Haven.

produce a herd of converts but no authentic experiences; and pressuring people in this way also would work “upon the emotions in a way that was not wholesome.”⁵⁰ This was a consistent message in this literature: Do not injure believers (and young believers in particular) by foisting upon them contrived or excessive methods. By the early twentieth century, these ideas dominated religious education among mainline American Protestants.

■ Conclusion

In the end, Starbuck’s empirical studies helped create a believable God for that large group of Americans who found evangelicalism distasteful. Although there was no doubt that evangelical conversions contained essences that were useful and vitalizing, Starbuck knew firsthand that this religious style was unnatural and would have to be reformed or superseded. At a deep level he and other psychologists such as George Coe were unsettled by the evangelical style, which they were able to appreciate only when it was measured and controlled. The transcendent God of American evangelicals, who suddenly irrupted in the self, was disturbing and confounding. Starbuck thought this God was too unpredictable and remote from human needs and aspirations. “Creator gods and absentee deities have never seemed to possess any potency,” Starbuck complained once; those notions and other childish ideas about miracles and healings were fanciful and evanescent. But “the feeling of a Presence has had body and substance” in my life, he wrote, moving me to insight, happiness and a “mighty inwardness.”⁵¹ (This inwardness, this sense of an inner spiritual dimension in all things, was so powerful that it preserved him from conservative believers and materialistic scientists who detested the mediations of his science of religious experience. There were a number of such critics; Starbuck appears to have ignored many of them.) Starbuck saw a spiritual power or principle operating even in his scientific studies of religion. Late in life he was certain that the psychology of religion had “worked on” him, directing his actions, calling him to its novel affirmations. God worked immanently in the measurements and methods of modern scientific culture.

Perhaps it was only this kind of powerful conviction that could have produced the sweeping religious reforms that, within twenty-five years, completely changed how American Protestants and other believers conceived of and practiced religious experience. Scientific, clinical, and pastoral studies of American religious experiences proliferated at an astonishing pace. Trying to understand this vast output, one reviewer complained in 1937 that few “of my readers can have any idea how large is the number of books and papers which have been written to explain religious phenomena from a psychological viewpoint.”⁵² No one, he said,

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁵¹ Starbuck, “Religion’s Use of Me,” 205.

⁵² P. Hopkins, “A Critical Survey of the Psychology of Religion,” in *Readings in the Psychology of Religion* (ed. Orlo Strunk; New York: Abingdon, 1959) 46.

including himself, could read them all. Many, including especially Starbuck and Coe, had industriously put their new notions into practice, developing dominant religious education associations, fashioning new schemes for religious nurture and creating new Sunday school curricula keyed more to gradual-growth models of faith. Suddenly, lesson plans for Sunday School were specific to age and psychological stage. It is no exaggeration to call this a revolution in how American believers thought about faith. Another observer of the situation noted that in the first decades of the twentieth century, putting the recommendations of Starbuck, Coe and others into practice “eclipsed perhaps every other project of the churches.” “Large numbers of men and women sought specialized training for service in [religious education’s] ranks”; new religious specialists helped children believe, adolescents convert, pastors buttress faith and banish disbelief—all with newly-minted scientific methods.⁵³ A scientifically-informed pastoral psychology movement blossomed. All of this represented the apogee of Starbuck’s project—a project of probing the universal psychological functions of religious experience and bringing into focus its most useful and healthy forms. Although by the interwar period theologians were critiquing and occasionally abandoning this and other liberal religious innovations, in the meantime Starbuck could justifiably look back on his life and rejoice that, for a crucial moment at least, he had in fact delivered on promises to usher in a “new era of religious experience.”

⁵³ H. Shelton Smith, *Faith and Nurture* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1941) 100–4.

Negative Theologies and the Cross

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So many postmodern theologians are busy retrieving “negative theology,” while others label such retrievals “misconstruals,” that observers might be tempted to conclude that there was, or is, such a single thing as “negative theology.” Yet anyone seeking a definition or even sampling relevant texts encounters a diverse array of premodern apophatic authors with a multiplicity of negative theologies. I here survey some of the diverse strands of Christian negative theology and argue in favor of one strand of that tradition in relation to Christ, the incarnation, and the cross.¹

The biblical foundations for negative theology are explicit. “My thoughts are higher than your thoughts,” says Isaiah’s LORD (Isa 55:9). The divine is *invisible*, *ineffable*, *incomprehensible*; these are all negations stemming from a recognition of divine transcendence. Early authors such as Justin, Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen of Alexandria built their theologies on these foundations. God by definition transcends our words, concepts, and capacities, such that all affirmations must be qualified and only negations are entirely true. So what? Or, rather, *then* what? Some authors make significant theological moves after the negations, drawing on this apophatic awareness of the surpassing transcendence of the Infinite, but they make *different* moves, and those differences are my main theme here. In short, where do such negations lead?

All types of Christian negative theology keep negations *connected*; they do not isolate some apophatic principle of God’s transcendence as if it were an independent epistemological truth. Negations remain connected, first of all, to affirmations, for there must be something to be negated, some content to work with; even negative prefixes negate some specific positive quality. Secondly, the negations are

¹ I thank Harvard Divinity School for the invitation and hospitality surrounding the Dudleian Lecture on 17 April 2008. I am most grateful to Sarah Coakley for her specific critique, as partially reflected in this revised text.

closely connected to biblical texts, since both the negations and the words that are negated are originally scriptural. Indeed, biblical symbols and metaphors reveal the interplay of affirmation and negation: the symbol is both like and *unlike* God. Finally, these biblical negations remain connected to liturgical communities. The Christian apophatic grows out of worshipping communities, not abstract inquiry. It is a misconstrual of negative theology to regard the apophatic as a free-floating epistemological principle for individuals, isolated from the cataphatic, from its biblical origins, and from liturgical communities of faith.²

To illustrate how theological negations can lead to different outcomes, I here propose three categories: the progressive apophatic, the complete apophatic, and the incarnational apophatic. Each has a central biblical source, a Greek Father, and later adherents in Latin Christianity. How each finds echoes in modern or postmodern discussions is more than I can document here.³

■ The Progressive Apophatic

In his “Contemplation on the Life of Moses,” Gregory of Nyssa develops a biblical narrative into an apophatic theology. Promised God’s favor and presence, Moses pleads to see God: “Show me your glory, I pray” (Exod 33:18). But what does it mean “to behold” God? Can one really do so “face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (Exod 33:11)? No, says the LORD, “I will make my goodness pass before you . . . but you cannot see my face” (Exod 33:19–20). Moses is hidden in the cleft of a rock, and only *after* God’s glory passes by may he look. “You shall see my back,” says the LORD, “but my face shall not be seen” (Exod 33:23).

Here Gregory advances a profound and influential interpretation. Moses does behold God, but with an apophatic twist. That Moses sees God’s back or backside is neither inappropriately anthropomorphic nor absurdly crude, in Gregory’s reading, but rather calls for a spiritual interpretation, an uplifting or “anagogical” exegesis. As if on Jacob’s ladder, says Gregory, Moses “continually climbed to the step above and never ceased to rise higher, because he always found a step higher than the one he had attained.”⁴ Reviewing the life of Moses, Gregory charts the Mosaic ascent and ceaseless desire to continue to ascend, culminating in this bold request to behold God. Here negation is gently implied in the idea of rising above one’s current level; stepping higher entails leaving the lower behind in a type of denial that is repeated over and over. As high as Moses may climb, “he

² Negative theology has “both a grammar *and* a vocabulary . . . the positive vocabulary of saying,” not just a grammar of *unsaying*, writes Mark Burrows, “Words that Reach into the Silence: Mystical Languages of Unsaying,” in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality* (ed. Mark Burrows and Elizabeth A. Dreyer; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005) 213.

³ But see Denys Turner, “Apophaticism, Idolatry and the Claims of Reason,” in *Silence and the Word* (ed. O. Davies and D. Turner; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 11–34, for links from some of these same premodern authors to various postmodern discussions.

⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses* 2.227 (trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson; New York: Paulist Press, 1978) 114.

is still unsatisfied in his desire for more.”⁵ Here Gregory’s apophatic becomes explicit: “the characteristic of the divine nature is to transcend all characteristics; [it] transcends knowledge; the Divine is by its very nature infinite, enclosed by no boundary.”⁶ “This truly is the vision of God,” says Gregory, “never to be satisfied in the desire to see him.”⁷ To see God’s back instead of God’s face is not to view a static image of a physical back but to engage in the dynamic process of following someone. It is to follow where God is leading, for “he who follows sees the back.”⁸ God leads Moses still higher, ever higher, always leaving behind the lower steps in a progressive apophatic. “So Moses, who eagerly seeks to behold God, is now taught *how* he can behold Him; to follow God wherever he might lead *is* to behold God.”⁹ This kind of dynamic negative theology recognizes that God is always beyond our grasp, our concepts, and our words, a recognition accompanied not by nihilistic despair but by the perpetual “hope [that] always draws the soul from the beauty which is seen to what is beyond.”¹⁰

Thus, to see God’s back is to follow God ever higher, a gentle form of the apophatic linked to Gregory by Jean Daniélou under the term “epektasis,” or “perpetual progress.”¹¹ This endless pursuit of the infinite and inexhaustible divine nature is what I call the “progressive apophatic.” Moses is the best biblical example of this phenomenon, but Gregory also interprets the Song of Songs this way, and he weaves Christ into both narratives. The bride in the Song, like Moses, pleads to see the Lover’s face, but he passes by (Song 5:6), not to forsake her but rather to draw her toward himself. She advances “towards that which lies before her and by always going out from what she has comprehended.”¹² Of course, once the Song of Songs enters the picture, the apophatic is more than knowing and unknowing; Gregory’s theme of “epektasis” applies not only to progressive knowledge of God by unknowing, but also to ceaseless desire and love for God. Negations thus lead to other, ever “higher” negations. This kind of progress, a generic form of negative theology, was often linked to the apostle Paul’s example of “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead” (Phil 3.13).

With such a broad biblical pedigree, it is no wonder that this theme surfaces in many later authors, Greek and Latin, with no necessary connection to Gregory of

⁵ Gregory, *Life of Moses* 2.230.

⁶ Ibid. 2.234–235.

⁷ Ibid. 2.239.

⁸ Ibid. 2.251.

⁹ Ibid. 2.252.

¹⁰ Ibid. 2.231.

¹¹ For an overview, see Daniélou, “Platonisme et théologie mystique (Paris: Aubier, 1944); for more detail, see Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (4 vols.; New York: Crossroads, 1994) 1:14. McGinn describes Gregory’s as “the first systematic negative theology in Christian history.”

¹² Gregory, *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (trans. C. McCambley; Brookline, Mass.: Hellenic College Press, 1987) 218.

Nyssa (although his work did enter the Latin world in the early medieval translation and appropriation by Eriugena). Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St. Thierry, for example, take up the theme of perpetual progress in the spiritual life; such progress is perhaps “epektetic,” to use McGinn’s adjectival coinage, but it is minimally apophatic. For Bernard, the Pauline model of “striving ceaselessly”¹³ is largely an affair of the heart, endless desire rather than endless knowledge. William of Saint Thierry combines intellect and love most expertly; for him the shared ascent of mind and heart is an endless progression, perpetually leaving behind that which has been known and loved. “Always to advance in this way is to arrive.”¹⁴

Like his friend and soulmate Bernard, William usually applies this theme of endless progress to the desires of the heart. Yet he also makes an apophatic point about unknowing, raising the matter, like Gregory, in connection to Moses in Exodus 33. When Moses is told, “you cannot see my face,” this refers to knowledge of the divine majesty, according William. “That knowledge is best known in this life by unknowing; the highest knowledge that a man can here and now attain consists in knowing in what way he does not know.”¹⁵

There are many other authors, medieval and modern, who share an affinity for this way of emphasizing an outcome of negative theology, the “progressive apophatic” that recognizes God’s transcendence and thus the limitations of human capacity to grasp the divine. Emmanuel Levinas, for example, built on this tradition, with explicit appreciation for Gregory of Nyssa.¹⁶ To give Gregory the last word in this section:

More is always being grasped, and yet something beyond that which has been grasped will always be discovered, and this search will never overtake its Object, because its fund is as inexhaustible as the growth of that which participates in it is ceaseless.¹⁷

No particular polemics accompany this benign outcome of apophatic theology, that negations lead to more negations without end, but other authors take Moses’ ascent up Mt. Sinai to another end, with more controversial results.

¹³ McGinn, *The Presence of God*, 2:216.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:260; William of Saint Thierry, *The Way to Divine Union* (trans. M. Basil Pennington; Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1998) 95.

¹⁵ *On Contemplating God* (ed. Sister Penelope; Cistercian Fathers Series 3; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1977) 137.

¹⁶ “The Trace of the Other,” in *Deconstruction in Context* (ed. Mark C. Taylor; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 359. I owe this reference to a helpful conversation with Stacy Johnson.

¹⁷ *Contra Eunomium* 1.291, lines 15–20 (trans. William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson; PG 45:340D; *NPNF*² 5:62) 112. See Deirdre Carabine, “Gregory of Nyssa on the Incomprehensibility of God,” in *The Relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity* (ed. T. Finan and V. Twomey; Dublin: Four Courts, 1992) 98.

■ The Complete Apophatic

After the “progressive apophatic,” here represented by Gregory of Nyssa, the second expression of negative theology I am proposing is the “complete apophatic,” which originated with Dionysius the Areopagite or Pseudo-Dionysius. This early sixth-century author knew the Cappadocian (and Alexandrian) tradition, but artfully disguised his debts. Like Gregory, Dionysius depicts Moses climbing higher and higher, leaving behind and thus denying the lower steps, negations leading to more negations; but after this temporary similarity there is a difference at the peak, in the darkness or cloud of unknowing. When the Dionysian Moses negates everything that is less than God, he completes his apophatic ascent and finds himself united with the Unknown God in the end. Negations lead ultimately to union with God. The apostle Paul’s sermon in Acts 17, indeed, began with the “unknown God” and ended up converting the original Dionysius and Damaris.

As a whole, the Pseudo-Dionysian writings convey a devout reverence for the transcendence of God, which is formulated in biblical terms. “We offer worship,” opens *The Divine Names*, “to that of the divine which lies hidden beyond thought and beyond being. With a wise silence we do honor to the inexpressible.”¹⁸ What immediately follows, however, is not a wise silence alone, or flat negation, but a complex engagement with Scripture according to an anagogical or uplifting interpretation that combines affirmation and negation:

With a wise silence we do honor to the inexpressible. We are raised up [uplifted] to the enlightening beams of the sacred scriptures, and with these to illuminate us, with our beings shaped to songs of praise, we behold the divine light, in a manner befitting us, and our praise resounds for that generous Source of all holy enlightenment, a Source which has told us about itself in the holy words of scripture.¹⁹

Dionysian apophatic theology, specifically in *The Mystical Theology*, can leave the misleading impression of an isolated and abstract principle that God is flatly unknowable. On the contrary, as I have elsewhere argued at some length, the Dionysian apophatic is paired with the kataphatic or affirmative theology in the interpretation of Scripture first of all.²⁰ The idea that negations about God are simply true whereas affirmations always need to be qualified (*The Celestial Hierarchy* 2) is all about interpreting the Bible. Such symbols as a cornerstone or the wind are both like and *unlike* God, and so are the human concepts that stem from their exegesis. This anagogical interpretation of “the enlightening beams of the sacred scriptures,” furthermore, is not individualistic but communal, not abstract but concretely based on the Scriptures and the liturgy of the faith community. All three variations on the

¹⁸ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* 1.589B. All translations of Pseudo-Dionysius are from *Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works* (trans. Colm Luibheid; New York: Paulist Press, 1987).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to their Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 53–57; 194–205, with other studies mentioned there.

apophatic presented here begin with the positive contents of Scripture in Christian communities of faithful worship and praise for the transcendent God.

So, Dionysius, like Gregory, charts the progress of Moses through purification and illumination up to perfection or union, but then there is a difference. Gregory's Moses never stops ascending, for his progressive apophatic is everlasting. The Dionysian apophatic is not perpetual but completed, in that Moses does arrive, and it is absolute in that by negating and surpassing everything that is not God, Moses ends up in God, united with God. Breaking free of what sees or is seen, Moses

plunges into the truly mysterious darkness of unknowing. Here, renouncing all that the mind may conceive, wrapped entirely in the intangible and the invisible, he belongs completely to him who is beyond everything. Here, being neither oneself nor someone else, one is supremely united to the wholly Unknown by an inactivity of all knowledge, and knows beyond the mind by knowing nothing.²¹

After all the biblical interpretation of the perceptible and the conceptual in the liturgical context of a worshipping community, the finale of the Dionysian apophatic is union with God. In the end, negation and silence is the direct way to the Unknown God, beyond words and thoughts. The apophatic is complete, not progressive, and it exists in ecstatic eternity, not everlasting time. It is also radically complete, for God is finally "not wisdom nor one nor oneness, divinity nor goodness; it is not spirit or son or fatherhood" (*The Mystical Theology*, chapter 5). Although it is only five pages long, *The Mystical Theology* invites extensive commentary, and I long ago offered my own, thirty pages worth. In this context, however, I take leave of Dionysius instead with a quotation from the end of *The Divine Names*.

Following all of his philosophical interpretation of the biblical names for God, the Areopagite's longest treatise also turns apophatic, and it moves toward the same climax of ecstatic union with God. Dionysius agrees with the Scripture writers, for

their preference is for the way up through negations, since this stands the soul outside everything which is correlative with its own finite nature [i.e. renders the soul ecstatic]. Such a way guides the soul through all the divine notions which are themselves transcended by that which is far beyond every name, all reason and all knowledge. Beyond the outermost boundaries of the world, the soul is brought into union with God himself to the extent that every one of us is capable of it.²²

The Dionysian apophatic culminates in union with God, beyond all affirmations and negations. Symbols and concepts, assertions with denials, have charted the way, but in the end they are all left behind. This variety of negative theology seeks and finds God by negating all that is less than the infinite God, including all finite

²¹ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* 1.1001A.

²² Ibid., *Divine Names* 13.981B.

words and concepts. No wonder that some later “mystical” theologians embraced the Dionysian form of negation, but only a few, for it is difficult to sustain the absolute apophatic by itself above and beyond the “progressive apophatic.” Perhaps the best example, surely the best-known, is Meister Eckhart.

Skipping many centuries, and the thin Dionysian thread into Western Latin theology by way of Eriugena’s translation and comments, we come to a Dominican tradition of negative theology. Albert the Great is the key figure here, before Thomas Aquinas and his mountain of material, especially in Albert’s commentary on the Dionysian *Mystical Theology*. Albert is rigorously apophatic when introducing the Areopagite’s interpretation of Moses’ ascent into the darkness of unknowing. Regarding lights and sounds and words, he says, “all these things have to be transcended, because none of them is what we seek in contemplation.”²³ Albert maintains the Dionysian insistence that Moses is united with the utterly unknown God by knowing nothing, and he does so without adding love to the experience as others did and do.²⁴ Albert remains completely apophatic right to the end of *The Mystical Theology*, where the “transcendence of him who is above all [even] transcends all negation. The names which are denied of him are denied because of his transcendence . . . [and] his transcendence defeats all negation.”²⁵

As launched by Albert and developed by Thomas, a Dominican trajectory epitomized by Meister Eckhart applied the mendicant ideal of poverty to apophatic theology, not only owning nothing or wanting nothing but also “knowing nothing,”²⁶ in the special sense later called “learned ignorance.” Eckhart very much liked and quoted the Dionysian caution about the “wise silence” that honors the inexpressible, and the idea that negations are true whereas affirmations are unsuitable.²⁷ God is beyond all names and words, even “good” or “being,” since God is beyond our understanding. If you have a God you can understand, goes the Augustinian saying that Eckhart passes on, it is not really God.²⁸ Commenting on Exodus 33, Eckhart says, “The meaning is then ‘Moses went into the darkness wherein God was,’ that is, into the surpassing light that beats down and darkens our intellect.”²⁹ He here quotes the Areopagite’s *Letter One*, “Perfect ignorance is the knowledge of him who is over all that is known.”³⁰ Here, echoing Dionysius’ comments on Moses,

²³ *Albert and Thomas: Selected Writings* (ed. Simon Tugwell; New York: Paulist Press, 1988) 158, trans. adjusted.

²⁴ McGinn, *Presence of God*, 4:23–24; see also my *Commentary*, 214–25.

²⁵ *Albert and Thomas*, 198.

²⁶ *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense* (ed. Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn; New York: Paulist Press, 1981) 199–203. To be abbreviated as *Essential Eckhart*.

²⁷ *Essential Eckhart*, 280; *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher* (ed. Bernard McGinn; New York: Paulist Press, 1986) 70. To be abbreviated Eckhart, *Teacher*.

²⁸ *Essential Eckhart*, 206–7. Si comprehendis, non est Deus. “If you understand [it], it is not God.” (Augustine’s *Sermon* 117.3.5 (PL 38:663).

²⁹ Eckhart, *Teacher*, 117.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 118; Pseudo-Dionysius, *Letter One* 1065B.

is Eckhart's complete apophatic, which constitutes the famous "breakthrough" into God beyond God, the sinking into the nothingness of God. Love takes God with a garment on, namely, God's goodness, but knowing and unknowing "peels everything away, and takes God bare," yet "can never encompass him in the sea of his unfathomableness."³¹ With the "negation of negation" the apophatic is absolute, and that is how one breaks through to God, in the unfathomable sea. Angela of Foligno, Hadewich, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and especially Marguerite Porete also spoke of the "abyss" in this way, as Amy Hollywood has pointed out.³² "Abyss" is itself a negation (a-byssum), but in the sense of a negativity regarding dereliction or abandonment, as McGinn argues,³³ rather than an apophasis about God per se. To conclude with Meister Eckhart: here, too, as with Dionysius, negative theology is not an abstract principle of language or religious epistemology, but rather a way of interpreting Scripture within the community of faith. This is clearer among the Byzantines, such as Gregory Palamas, but Eckhart's best expressions of this complete apophatic do occur in his homilies, meaning that they are founded on biblical content and take place within a liturgical context.³⁴ In this respect, the postmodern contender for expressing a complete apophatic, namely, Jacques Derrida, was correct to distance himself from Dionysius and Eckhart, because they held on to the biblical content within liturgical communities, whereas he wanted no such kataphatic baggage.³⁵ The Dionysian basis of this outcome of negative theology (that negations lead to more negations *and* ultimately to union with God) immediately came in for some vigorous commentary exactly on this apophatic point.

■ The Incarnational Apophatic

When Dionysius took his apophatic method to the extreme (stating that God is not wisdom or oneness, divinity or goodness, not Spirit or Son or Father), it was too much for some readers, including the first commentators. In the *Scholia*, or marginal comments attributed to Maximus the Confessor, we read:

³¹ Eckhart, *Teacher*, 254.

³² Amy Hollywood, *The Soul as Virgin Wife* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995) 131.

³³ Bernard McGinn, "The Hidden God in Luther and Some Mystics," in *Silence and the Word*, 103–10. See also McGinn's forthcoming essay, "Three Forms of Negativity in Christian Mysticism," in *Sciences and Religions: Knowing the Unknowable about God and the Universe* (ed. John W. Bowker; London: I.B. Tauris).

³⁴ For Eckhart and Dionysius, see Bernard McGinn, *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart* (New York: Crossroads, 2001) 177–78.

³⁵ See especially the discussion between Derrida and Marion in Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name, How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology,'" in *God, the Gift and Postmodernism* (ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1999) 42–47, 68–70. Jeffrey Fisher argues for the compatibility of Derrida and Dionysius in "The Theology of Dis/similarity: Negation in Pseudo-Dionysius," *The Journal of Religion* 81 (2001) 529–48.

Do not let this chapter disturb you and do not think that this divine man is blaspheming. His purpose is to show that God is not a being among beings but is beyond beings. For if [God] himself has brought forth all beings in creation, how can he be found to be one being among other beings?³⁶

What then to do with this “apostolic” apophatic? Once one allows Dionysius to define the terms, as do most of the premodern thinkers I am exploring here, one has limited the field considerably, as Grace Jantzen, Beverly Lanzetta and other feminist theologians have rightly pointed out.³⁷

The first commentator, John of Scythopolis, tried to preserve some knowing amid the unknowing. Entering the darkness, “Moses in unknowing knew everything. . . . [Dionysius] explains here how God is known through unknowing.”³⁸ Even *The Mystical Theology*’s final list of negations (“not spirit or sonship or fatherhood”) is tempered by John’s paraphrase in that he retains the term “Trinity.” “No one knows the pure *Trinity* as it is. . . . We do not know what the subsistence of the pure *Trinity* is, for we are not of its essence.”³⁹ What John of Scythopolis does with specific Dionysian texts is fascinating but fragmentary.

A clearer example of turning the Dionysian apophatic to a different end, the third and final outcome for negative theology covered here, is the work of Maximus the Confessor. As hinted in the *Scholia*, Maximus interpreted Dionysius directly in his other works. In order to approach God “entirely above essence and entirely above thought,” Moses enters the darkness of unknowing, “beyond the whole nature of the intelligible and the sensible realities.”⁴⁰ But then what? Here is the decisive theological, or rather Christological, move in applying the apophatic impulse. Yes, “no one has ever seen God,” as the evangelist John says, but what then? Maximus makes his move, a decisive move, and it is not Dionysian.

The knowledge of [God the Word] himself in his essence and personhood remains inaccessible to all angels and men alike and he can in no way be known by anyone. But St. John, initiated as perfectly as humanly possible into the meaning of the Word’s incarnation, claims that he has seen the glory of the Word as flesh, that is, he saw the reason or the plan for which God became man, full of grace and truth. For it was not as God by essence, consubstantial to God the Father, that the only-begotten Son gave this grace, but

³⁶ PG 4:429; of uncertain authorship, not by John of Scythopolis, perhaps by Maximus.

³⁷ Grace Jantzen, *Power, Gender, and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 109; Beverly Lanzetta, “Via Feminina and the Un-saying of ‘Woman,’” in *Radical Wisdom: A Feminist Mystical Theology* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2005) 15–16. .

³⁸ PG 4:421AB. See Paul Rorem and John C. Lamoreaux, *John of Scythopolis and the Dionysian Corpus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) 244.

³⁹ PG 4:432B, Lamoreaux, *John of Scythopolis*, 248 [emphasis added].

⁴⁰ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge* 2.82–83, in *Maximus the Confessor: Selected Writings* (ed. and trans. George C. Berthold; New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 144.

as having in the incarnation become man by nature, and consubstantial to us, that he bestows grace on us who have need of it.⁴¹

In the evangelist John's terms, "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (John 1:18). Negations thus lead to Christ incarnate.

Here the apophatic serves the incarnational, just as the apostle Paul's sermon in Athens began with the Unknown God and ended with the one raised from the dead. For Maximus, the apophatic recognition of God's transcendence does not lead to endless progress as it does for Gregory, or directly to union with the unknown God as it does for Dionysius, but rather to Christ as the incarnate revelation of God. Where the first outcome invoked endless time and the second featured ecstatic eternity, this third emphasizes salvation history. Of course Gregory and Dionysius had their own Christologies, as various texts show, but their apophatic moves went in other directions, with other outcomes. Maximus is not critiquing Dionysius, the apostolic Father, but his text supplements the Areopagite's with this direct link between negative theology and the incarnation. To put it flatly, because we cannot know God as transcendent, we look instead to God as incarnate. Dionysius never makes this connection explicit. His negative theology never turns christological in *The Mystical Theology* or *The Divine Names*, and his comments on Christ, the incarnation, and the cross in *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* never turn apophatic.⁴² There is one hint of the connection in *Letter Three*: "the transcendent has put aside its own hiddenness and has revealed itself to us by becoming a human being" yet remaining hidden.⁴³ This connection is never developed in Dionysius, however. It is Maximus who develops it, moving from the apophatic regarding God's (immanent) transcendence to the kataphatic regarding God's (economic) incarnation. Where do negations lead? Where Gregory features "epektasis" or endless progress, and Dionysius emphasized "apophasis" or absolute negation, Maximus repeatedly turns to "kenosis," the idea that the divine Word emptied itself into human likeness to the point of death, as the apostle Paul says.

This variation on negative theology has many expressions. In the East, we would encounter the distinction between essence and energies or activities. The Western Latin tradition discussed here moves from a broad application of negative theology to the incarnation and human life in general to a specific focus on the mortality and death of Christ in particular. In the thirteenth century, Bonaventure, for example, follows the Pauline "kenosis" from the divine down to the "human form" all the way

⁴¹ Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge* 2:76; Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996) 52–54.

⁴² Ysabel de Andia has written eloquently on the Dionysian apophatic and on the cross in Dionysius: "La théologie négative et la croix," in *Denys l'Aréopagite. Tradition et métamorphoses* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2006) 107–27. Yet she does not establish any direct linkage between the apophatic and the cross in Dionysius, in my judgment.

⁴³ *Letter Three*, 1069B. I owe this qualification to the helpful critique of Charles Stang, whose Harvard dissertation develops a Dionysian apophatic anthropology in another way.

to the “point of death,” and he does so with an explicit move from the Dionysian apophatic to a Franciscan focus on Christ crucified. At the culmination of his classic work, *The Soul's Journey into God*, Bonaventure turns apophatic in his own way. Passing over into God in ecstatic contemplation, as Francis did, means that “all intellectual activities must be left behind and the height of our affection must be totally transferred and transformed into God.”⁴⁴ Here Bonaventure has integrated love into unknowing, following the Victorine line, a subject that I am pursuing elsewhere. Yet there is more. He explicitly quotes Dionysius’ *Mystical Theology* at some length, regarding the “ecstasy of a pure mind leaving behind all things and freed from all things, you will ascend to the superessential ray of divine darkness.”⁴⁵ Then the Franciscan makes the Christological move from Moses and darkness to Christ, and not merely to the incarnation of Christ but all the way to the cross. When one seeks the Dionysian “superessential ray of the divine darkness,” he suggests, one enters the silent darkness of death with Christ crucified.

Whoever loves this death can see God because it is true beyond doubt that “man shall not see me and live” (Exod 33:20). Let us, then, die and enter the darkness; let us impose silence upon our cares, our desires and our imaginings. With Christ crucified let us pass “out of this world to the Father” (John 13:1).⁴⁶

The ending of Bonaventure’s “Itinerary” is allusive and poetic and profoundly moving, far beyond the confines of negative theology. Nevertheless, with Maximus, Bonaventure moves from the Dionysian apophatic to a christological proclamation. Moving beyond the Confessor’s focus on the incarnation, the Seraphic Doctor stresses the culmination of the incarnation in the cross, following the Pauline “kenosis” to the end.

This specific outcome of negative theology, moving from the apophatic to the crucified, is also represented by Martin Luther, and helps put his critique of Dionysius into the context of a prior tradition, before the usual legacy of John Tauler. Like Maximus and Bonaventure, Luther knew well the negative theology of the Dionysian corpus. Unlike them, however, he did not revere this author as the Areopagite of Acts 17 and in fact quite openly ridiculed this Dionysius, “whoever he was,” for his “hodge-podge” about angels, his idle liturgical allegories, and especially his dangerous teachings in *The Mystical Theology*.⁴⁷ In *The Babylonian Captivity*, Luther writes,

So far, indeed, from learning Christ in them [the Dionysian works], you will lose even what you already know of him. I speak from experience. Let us

⁴⁴ Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God* 7.4 (ed. and trans. Ewert Cousins; New York: Paulist Press, 1978) 113.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 7.5.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 7.6.

⁴⁷ Paul Rorem, “Martin Luther’s Christocentric Critique of Pseudo-Dionysian Spirituality,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 11 (1997) 291–307.

rather hear Paul, that we may learn Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor 2:2).⁴⁸

Elsewhere, Luther directly addresses the subject of “negative theology” and how it should turn us to the incarnation and the cross. Early and late in his career he expressed differences with Dionysius regarding Sinai’s cloud or darkness of unknowing. In the very early *Dictata* on the Psalms, he writes:

Therefore [b.] Dionysius teaches that one must enter into anagogical darkness and ascend by way of denials. For thus God is hidden and beyond understanding. [Alternatively], this can be understood as referring to the mystery of the Incarnation. For He is concealed in humanity, which is His darkness. Here He could not be seen but only heard.⁴⁹

Here, toward the beginning of his career, Luther makes the same point that Maximus made, turning from the darkness of the absolute God to the mystery of the incarnation in humanity.⁵⁰ Later, Luther went still further, not only in his bold critique of Dionysius but also in following the “kenosis” of an incarnational negative theology all the way to the cross, as with Bonaventure.

Therefore Dionysius, who wrote about “negative theology” and “affirmative theology,” deserves to be ridiculed. [In the latter part of his work] he defines “affirmative theology” as “God is being.” “Negative theology” he defines as “God is nonbeing.” But, if we wish to give a true definition of “negative theology,” we should say that it is the holy cross and the afflictions [attending it].⁵¹

Luther’s overall “theology of the cross” is too large a topic to discuss here.⁵² The pertinent point is that Luther explicitly moves from a Dionysian apophatic to a “negative theology” of the cross. The “mystical theologians,” he writes elsewhere, may call going into the darkness “ascending beyond being and non-being,” preferring to omit all pictures of Christ’s suffering; but, he says rather emphatically, “The CROSS alone is our theology.”⁵³

When Luther says, “Let us rather hear Paul,” he refers to the apostle Paul’s foolishness of the cross, that God is not so much “unknown” as “hidden” in Christ.

⁴⁸ *Luther’s Works* (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehmann; 55 vols.: St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–) 36:109; *Luthers Werke* (ed. J. F. K. Knaake et al.; 57 vols.: Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Weimar: Bohlaus, 1883–) 6:562, lines 8–13 (hereafter cited as WA).

⁴⁹ *Luther’s Works*, 10:119–20; WA 3:124, lines 32–35.

⁵⁰ See also Luther’s comment that “inexperienced monks rise into heaven with their speculations and think about God as He is in himself. From this absolute God everyone should flee who does not want to perish,” *Luther’s Works* 12:312; WA 40/2:329.

⁵¹ *Luther’s Works*, 13:110–11; WA 40/3:543, lines 8–13.

⁵² See now Vitor Westhelle, *The Scandalous God: The Use and Abuse of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006). In the fourth (1954) edition of Walther von Loewenich’s classic *Luthers theologia crucis* (Munich: Kaiser, 1954), his new “Afterword” reconsidered how Luther’s theology of the cross related to prior traditions of mysticism (245–48).

⁵³ WA 5:176, lines 27–33. Cf. WA 56:299, line 27, to 300, line 3; *Luther’s Works*, 25:287.

That Dionysius had applied 1 Corinthians instead to a general statement about negations was already a concern to the Areopagite's first commentator, back in the sixth century. John of Scythopolis then wrote, "Note how the father understood the saying of the apostle, for Chrysostom and the other fathers understood it to apply to the cross."⁵⁴ John does not suggest that Dionysius neglects the cross in general, but points out that the Areopagite did not here move from foolishness/wisdom to Christ crucified. Thus, with "other fathers" who turned negative theology to the cross, we should regard Luther as continuing the Pauline concerns of John the scholiast, Maximus the Confessor, and Bonaventure the Franciscan in this third use of the apophatic.

Yet Luther goes further still, uncomfortably for apophatic theologians. "Negative theology" does not lead neatly to the cross; it is actually opposed to the cross. Insofar as any negative theology seeks to manage God, it glorifies the self and is thus condemned by the cross. Negative theology can be all about our self-analysis, our recognition of the infinite, our epistemology, what we can and cannot know, but the cross is about God's "kenosis," the infinite in the finite, the divine soteriology, what God has done and will yet do. Further, for Luther, this Christological turn is not simply a safe approach to God through the crucified, some successful albeit indirect access to the transcendent God after all. God preached is hidden and revealed in Christ, but the God not preached remains hidden, beyond our theological strategies.⁵⁵ Discourse about negative theology and the cross is not the point; for Luther, a theoretical theology of the cross is futile. What matters is when the Word of the cross kills and makes alive again. The bad news for negative theology, Luther insists, is that the incarnate one died because we tortured and killed him, we who are not God and who are indeed opposed to God.⁵⁶ "You have become his betrayers and murderers," said Stephen (Acts 7:52). Luther's negative theology of the cross turns to the condemnation of the law, first of all, the active proclamation of judgment unto repentance, and then to the gospel. When God's Word of and on the cross destroys our theologies, apophatic and otherwise, then true faith in God is born.

■ Summary

To be simplistically kataphatic about it, there are at least these three outcomes for negative theology from the premodern tradition. First, a perpetual or "progressive apophatic" based on Exodus 33, with Moses ever advancing morally and spiritually by following God in everlasting time. Negations lead to more negations. Second, a "complete apophatic," which understands Sinai's darkness of unknowing in Exodus

⁵⁴ *Scholia* 340.4 on *Divine Names* 7.865B; Lamoreaux, *John of Scythopolis*, 226.

⁵⁵ David Tracy uses and advances Brian Gerrish's categories of Hiddenness 1 and Hiddenness 2, in "The Hidden God: The Divine Other of Liberation," *Cross Currents* 46 (1996) 5–16.

⁵⁶ *Luther's Works*, 42:10; G. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997) 3, 8.

19 and 20 as mystical union with God in ecstatic eternity. Negations lead to union with God. Third, an “incarnational apophatic,” following John 1 and Philippians 2, which explicitly turns from this darkness to the incarnation and cross of Christ in salvation history. Negations describing God transcendent lead to faith in God incarnate and crucified.

Gregory of Nyssa taught “epektasis,” followed by William of St. Thierry and many others; Dionysius taught an “apophasis” of union, followed by Meister Eckhart and very few others; Maximus the Confessor taught the Pauline “kenosis,” which was taken further by Bonaventure to the death of Christ and still further by Martin Luther. There may have been other types or better examples; there are surely different apophatic moves possible today.

What moderns and postmoderns make of all this, I leave to others to discern, with just a few suggestions. Emmanuel Levinas and others echo the progress of Moses following God. Jacques Derrida wanted a complete apophatic, but distanced himself from Dionysius and Eckhart for their linkage of the apophatic to the (biblical) kataphatic and to the (liturgical) community of faith. In modern theology, the classical orthodox tradition of Maximus, apart from the Latin Bonaventure and the Protestant Luther, has been represented ably, even beautifully, by Hans Urs von Balthasar.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Besides his direct expositions of Maximus, such as *The Cosmic Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003), see the eloquent little “elucidation” on “The Unknown God,” *Elucidations* (trans. John Riches; London: SPCK, 1975) 18–25.

Ritual Efficacy, Hasidic Mysticism and “Useless Suffering” in the Warsaw Ghetto

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“*Learn to think with pain.*”¹

Between November 1940 and April 1943, nearly four hundred thousand Jews were imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto and systematically murdered. Among them was Rabbi Kalonymos Shapira (1889–1943), who had founded one of the largest Hasidic academies in Warsaw in 1923.² Before the war, he had also written extensively on the discipline of the emotions as a component of prophetic training and spiritual education. Overtaken by the genocide of Jews in Europe, however, Rabbi Shapira turned his attention in the Ghetto writings to consideration of the rupture that these events entailed and their implications for his pre-war cosmology. A reading attuned to anthropological concerns is called for because even excellent historical and theological accounts have typically failed to privilege the ritual and cosmological dimensions of Rabbi Shapira’s concern, or their relationship to his pre-war writings on emotion and religious subjectivity.³ Another way of saying

¹ Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster* (trans. Ann Smock; Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1995) 44.

² The school was named *Daas Moshe* after Rabbi Shapira’s father-in-law, who took charge of his education at the age of three, when his father, Rabbi Elimelekh of Grodzisk, died. This was the first in a series of deep personal losses that characterized Rabbi Shapira’s life before the holocaust, including the premature death of his wife, Rachel Hayyah Miriam. Nehemia Polen, *The Holy Fire: The Teachings of Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira* (London: Jason Aronson, 1994) 4–6.

³ Most recent studies of Rabbi Shapira’s corpus have focused largely on his Ghetto writings and on his “theodicy” or beliefs about suffering. In alphabetical order, see Henry Abramson, “Metaphysical Nationality in the Warsaw Ghetto: Non-Jews in the Writings of Kalonimus Kalmish Shapira,” in *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews During the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (ed.

this might be that “the problem of meaning” has distracted scholars from Rabbi Shapira’s quest for ritual efficacy in a context of radical suffering and frequently unbearable pain.⁴

This is at least partly because analytic concern with “meaning” in the study of religion still tends to privilege discursive coherence at the expense of sufferers’ desperate concern with practical efficacy. Geertz exemplifies the trend when he asserts that the problem of suffering “*from a religious point of view . . . is not how to avoid suffering . . . but how to suffer, how to make of physical pain, personal loss . . . or the helpless contemplation of others’ agony something bearable, supportable—something, as we say, sufferable,*” which is really to say, “meaningful” and “symbolically coherent.”⁵ This intervention is important, given our society’s valorization of technical efficacy to the exclusion of much else. But by reducing

Joshua D. Zimmerman; New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003) 158–169; idem, “The *Esh Kodesh* of Rabbi Kalonimus Kalmish Shapiro: A Hasidic Treatise on Communal Trauma from the Holocaust,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 37 (2000) 321–35; Mendel Piekartz, *Ideological Trends of Hasidism in Poland During the Interwar Period and the Holocaust* ([Hebrew] Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1990); Nehemia Polen, “Divine Weeping: Rabbi Kalonymos Shapiro’s Theology of Catastrophe in the Warsaw Ghetto,” *Modern Judaism* 7 (1987) 253–69; idem, “Theological Responses to the *Hurban* from within the *Hurban*,” in *Jewish Perspectives on the Experience of Suffering* (ed. Shalom Carmy; New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1999) 277–96; idem, *The Holy Fire*; idem, “Sealing the Book with Tears: Divine Weeping on Mount Nebo and in the Warsaw Ghetto,” in *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination* (ed. Kimberley Christine Patton and John Stratton Hawley; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) 83–93; Eliezer Schweid, *From Ruin to Salvation* [Hebrew], (Israel: Kibbutz ha-Meuhad, 1994); and Pesah Schindler, *Hasidic Responses to the Holocaust in the Light of Hasidic Thought* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1990). Exceptions to the focus on the holocaust writings are short essays by Shaul Magid, “Introduction: Beginning, False Beginning and the Desire for Innovation,” in Aryeh Cohen and Shaul Magid, *Beginning/Again: Toward a Hermeneutics of Jewish Texts* (New York: Seven Bridges, 2002) xvii–xxxvi; and Ron Wacks, “Emotion and Enthusiasm in the Educational Theory of Rabbi Kalonymos Kalman Shapira of Piacezna” [Hebrew], *Hagut: Jewish Educational Thought* 5–6 (2003–2004) 71–88. A collection of letters and other testimonies concerning Rabbi Shapira has been published as *Zikhron Kodesh le-Va’al ‘Esh Kodesh* (Jerusalem: Vaad Hasidei Piasecno, 1994).

⁴ By ritual efficacy, I mean the ability of ritual to do “work” of different kinds for those who enact it. Sometimes this may well relate to the production of cultural and religious meaning, or to the enactment of social relationships that have been studied by anthropologists. But I will emphasize that ritual is also practiced for the sake of changes in the phenomenal world such as healing or destruction of enemies, or to render shifts in subjectivity that are not limited in any way to the promotion of symbolic coherence or the representation of cultural and religious tropes. A good overview is given by Thomas Csordas and E. Lewton in “Practice, Performance and Experience in Ritual Healing,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 35 (1998) 435–512. For a related argument on the importance of shifting Hasidic studies towards a focus on ritual efficacy, see Don Seeman, “Emotion, Martyrdom and the Work of Ritual in R. Mordecai Leiner of Izbica’s *Mei Ha-Shiloah*,” *AJS Review* 27 (2003) 253–80; Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). An ethnographic reflection that raises some of these issues in a powerful way is Roland K. Littlewood and Simon Dein, “The Effectiveness of Words: Religion and Healing among the Lubavitch of Stamford Hill,” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 19 (1995) 339–83; also Don Seeman, “Subjectivity, Culture, Life-World: An Appraisal,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 36(1999) 437–45.

⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 104, emphasis added.

the problem of suffering to a problem of meaning and interpretation, Geertz also inadvertently validates the subjectivism of post-Kantian apologists for religion such as Schleiermacher, who defend religion by circumscribing it to a realm of unassailable inner experience.⁶ For Rabbi Shapira, the problems of meaning and of practical efficacy in suffering were never parted. They were linked by his overall concern with embodied subjectivity, and especially by the discipline of the emotions that he taught.

Scholars have been reluctant to confront the hard limits placed on meaning-making by radical suffering, which can be both world and consciousness destroying.⁷ The destruction of European Jewry raises this concern in an especially urgent way, as Lawrence Langer has argued.⁸ But whereas Langer depicts almost all accounts of meaning in Holocaust narratives as misguided or even bad-faith attempts to quiet the “alarmed vision” of radical demoralization, Rabbi Shapira’s Ghetto writings exemplify a more complicated and provisional approach. As a communal and religious leader in the Warsaw Ghetto, he could permit himself neither the comfort of seamless “webs of significance” described by Geertz nor the severe self-consistency of their denial. Like the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, he grappled with the phenomenological implications of “useless suffering” that had lost its moral mooring, or “use,” because it could no longer be assimilated to any system of secular or religious theodicy.⁹ His own response, however, was hermeneutic and literary rather than philosophic in nature. Through his sometimes startling interpretations of classic texts, he attempted to create a discursive space for the experience of uselessness, but also to frame that experience in terms of distinctive ritual and affective strategies that would allow his followers—and the cosmos itself—to resist collapse.

⁶ See Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). The shared genealogy of hermeneutic approaches to ritual in the social sciences and certain forms of modern Christianity has already been noted by Talal Asad in *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1993). It may be objected that anthropologists focus on shared public meanings of ritual practice whereas theologians like Schleiermacher insist on the ineffably private nature of religious experience, yet both Geertz and Schleiermacher seek to defend the autonomy of a sphere called “religion” by asserting that it deals uniquely with matters that cannot be falsified through its claims to verifiable truth or pragmatic efficacy. For a more developed critique of the hermeneutic approach to ritual, see Don Seeman, “Otherwise than Meaning: On the Generosity of Ritual,” *Social Analysis* 48 (2004) 55–71.

⁷ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁸ Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); idem, “The Alarmed Vision: Social Suffering and Holocaust Atrocity,” *Daedalus* 125 (1996) 47–65.

⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, “Useless Suffering,” trans. Richard Cohen, in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, (ed. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood; New York: Routledge, 1988) 156–67. Seeman, “Otherwise than Meaning,” takes up the relationship between this essay and ritual theory in greater detail.

■ Prophecy and Neurasthenia: An Emotional Cosmology

In addition to a single slim volume of writings from the Warsaw Ghetto, Rabbi Shapira's extant works include a volume of pre-war homiletic and interpretive essays and a series of pedagogical tracts devoted to the spiritual development of students at various stages.¹⁰ It is in these early works that his pre-war theory of the emotions finds its most systematic expression, based on a complex adaptation of mystical models, Hasidic innovations, and elements of cosmopolitan medicine. His preoccupation with nervous disorder as a paradigm for religious phenomena such as prophecy is especially noteworthy in this regard, because it sets him apart to some extent from earlier Hasidic writers. It is difficult to assess the Ghetto writings without reference to these pre-war reflections, because it is here that the ritual management of subjectivity and emotional experience that preoccupied Rabbi Shapira during the Holocaust years is first revealed as a pillar of his religious project.

The pedagogical tracts grew explicitly out of Rabbi Shapira's profound sense of crisis in Polish Jewish society between the wars. Like many of his colleagues, he was appalled and disheartened by the powerful tide of secularism that was evident among the young, and by the Jewish community's increasingly precarious political and economic situation.¹¹ Confronting this situation, he argued that an epochal change had taken place among European youth that rendered traditional, hierarchy-based educational strategies irrelevant:

Why, in previous generations, did any type of education at all seem to suffice? The vast majority of every teacher's students and every father's children became servants of God. This is no longer the case today. . . . The youth has arisen and considers itself mature before its time. . . . Our sages have already warned us about this from the beginning: "In the time of the heralding of the Messiah, arrogance will multiply." . . . Sometimes [today] we are astounded to see literal children bearing such a spirit of independence and courage . . . [that they seem to] consider themselves to be grown men.¹²

¹⁰ All of Rabbi Shapira's surviving publications are in Hebrew. The wartime essays, which were probably delivered orally in Yiddish on the Sabbath before Rabbi Shapira wrote them in Hebrew, were published as Kalonymos Kalman Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh* (Jerusalem: Hasidei Piasezno: 1960) and subsequently translated as *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939–1942* (trans. J. Hershy Worch; Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson: 2000). His pre-war homiletic volume is published as *Derekh ha-Melekh* (Jerusalem: Hasidei Piasezno, 1991). Pedagogic works include *Hakhsharat ha-Avrekhim*, *Mavo ha-She'arim* and *Tzav ve-Zeruz*, all of which are published under the same cover as *Hakhsharat ha-Avrekhim* (Jerusalem: Hasidei Piasezno, 1962). A meditative handbook, *Bnei Mahashavah Tovah* (Jerusalem: Hasidei Piasezno, 1989), has appeared in English as *Conscious Community* (trans. Andrea Cohen-Kiener; Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1989). The only volume to achieve widespread publication during his lifetime was however his first pedagogic tract, *Hovat ha-Talmidim* (Jerusalem: Oraysoh, 1990), which has been translated as *A Student's Obligation: Advice from the Rebbe of the Warsaw Ghetto* (trans. Micha Oddenheimer; Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1991). Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Hebrew in this article are my own.

¹¹ See Piekarz, *Ideological Trends*, 377.

¹² Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 15.

Rabbi Shapira perceived this trend to be irreversible, and although he could hardly describe it as other than arrogance [*hutzpah*], he also makes clear that it bears within itself a form of messianic potential, which is why he addresses the educational tracts directly to young people who are now called to take personal responsibility for their own spiritual and moral growth.¹³ Like the educational reformer Janusz Korczak, who also spent his last years in the Warsaw Ghetto not far from Rabbi Shapira—and who went willingly to his death rather than abandon his young students—Rabbi Shapira argues that youths must now be treated as independent moral agents.¹⁴

Arousal and management of the emotions were indispensable to this project. The only one of Rabbi Shapira's major manuscripts to see publication during his lifetime was *Hovat ha-Talmidim* ("The Obligation of Students"), which first appeared in 1932. Near the beginning of this work, he argues that only an emotional approach to Jewish education would stem the tide of disaffection evident among the young:

It is difficult for the youth of our generation, whose emotions [*hitragshuyot*] and passions [*hitpa'aluyot*] have already been hardened and matured, to feel a sense of connection to [religious] principles through dry intellect alone. . . . We must pierce through to their soul, to arouse and inflame it, and to allow them to experience . . . the sweetness of even a slight illumination of the supernal light.¹⁵

This was no mere rhetoric. The experience of "a slight illumination of the supernal light" had a definite cosmological referent for Rabbi Shapira, and implied the programmatic induction of young students into Hasidic mysticism. This was also an early statement of his preoccupation with emotional damping as a primary danger to social and religious continuity in the Jewish community. Students needed to be "aroused" and "inflamed," according to Rabbi Shapira, and to have their imaginative capacities intensified, even though they previously would have been considered

¹³ The "arrogance that heralds the coming of the Messiah" [*hutzpah de-iqveta de-meshiha*] is a Talmudic expression (*b. Sotah* 49a) deployed by many modern traditionalists struggling to make sense of the massive changes, desolations and large-scale defections of the modern period. For just a few examples from rabbis with a wide variety of different outlooks on modernity, see Shapira, *Bnei Mahashavah Tovah* 12; Rabbi Elhanan Bunim Wasserman, *Kovetz Ma'amarim* (Jerusalem: Gitler Brothers, 1991) 106–7 and Gershon Greenberg, "Elhanan Wasserman's Response to the Growing Catastrophe in Europe: The Role of Ha'gra and Hofets Hayim Upon His Thought," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 10 (2000) 171–104; Benjamin Ish Shalom, *Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook: Between Rationalism and Mysticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993) 59, 89, 160. On the specific redemptive meaning of this term for Rabbi Shapira, see Schweid's convincing analysis in *From Ruin to Salvation*.

¹⁴ The comparison between Shapira and Korczak is deserving of further study. See Janusz Korczak, *The Warsaw Ghetto Memoirs of Janusz Korczak* (trans. E. P. Kulawiec; Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978); Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud's Vienna and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991) 191–206.

¹⁵ Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 23.

too young for such training.¹⁶ His approach was in accord with widespread Hasidic ideals concerning the role of the emotions in religious life, but was later cast into sharp relief by Rabbi Shapira's increasing focus in his Ghetto writings on the dangers of hyper-emotionality and nervous collapse.

Agitations of the Soul

One of the reasons that increased affect was so important to Hasidic writers in general, and to Rabbi Shapira in particular, was that emotions were conceived as intermediate points in a scheme of divine emanation (*hishtalshelut*) that linked abstract thought to coarse matter. He probably would have approved the anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo's suggestion that scholars treat emotion as "embodied thought in which I am personally involved," but he would also have attached an important cosmological proviso.¹⁷ For Hasidism, the "embodiment of thought" in human emotion participates in a cascade of divine vitality (often described as "light" or "abundance") into the mundane, phenomenal world. Vitality is "drawn down" through a series of increasingly narrow "vessels," each of which is identified with a different faculty of human thought, emotion, or action. Emotional experience is thus conceived as a kind of divine substance, sacred at its core despite the appearance of pollution sometimes occasioned by its bodily context—"like clear water," Rabbi Shapira writes, "in a filthy glass."¹⁸ The content of emotional life is crucial to both mystical reflection and ritual practice because through attentiveness to emotional life and its source, human beings can attain privileged access to their own hidden continuity with divine subjectivity.

Many of these teachings are inherited from older schools of Jewish mysticism, but the Hasidic revolution that began in the eighteenth century elevated anthropopathic correspondence to new importance. The founders of Hasidism enacted a shift in focus away from theosophical speculation on the dynamic process of divine emanation toward what Scholem called a "mystical psychology" focused on the dynamic structure of human experience.¹⁹ Anthropopathic correspondence between human emotional life and aspects of unfolding divinity meant that adepts could learn to seek understanding of one through reflection upon the other. "With every one of the endless stages of the theosophical world corresponding to a given state of the soul," Scholem famously remarks, "Kabbalism becomes an instrument of psychological analysis and self knowledge . . . the precision of which is not infrequently rather astounding."²⁰ In Rabbi Shapira's words, the founders of Hasidism revealed "the

¹⁶ See Wacks, "Emotion and Enthusiasm"; Piekarz, *Ideological Trends*, 374.

¹⁷ Michelle Z. Rosaldo, "Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling," in *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion* (ed. Richard Shweder and Robert Levine; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 143.

¹⁸ Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 98.

¹⁹ Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1941) 341.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

correspondence between the various levels of the soul as it emanates from the lofty divine realm down into the body, and the stages of contraction represented by the various worlds,” and he frequently avers that his own willingness to engage in mystical speculation is limited to that which can be revealed through the intimacy of human experience.²¹

An important but often underestimated corollary of this approach is that the shifting contours of human experience also gain a purchase on cosmic reality through practices like ritual weeping, whereby adepts—both Hasidic and non-Hasidic—sought to shift the divine visage toward compassion.²² Ritual aspects of mourning and celebration as well as the performance of mundane acts such as eating or walking with proper intentionality—not to mention the performance of the commandments—were all infused with theurgic and magical potential, especially where the Hasidic *tzaddiq* or master was concerned. The *tzaddiq* became a virtual *axis mundi* whose efficacious practice helped to direct the flow of vitality and blessing through all the regions of creation for both mundane and cosmic subsistence, and it is difficult to conceive of Hasidism without the dynamic charismatic influence of this institution.²³ Rabbi Shapira was heir to several different

²¹ For example Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 98–99, 171. Rabbi Shapira himself claims that this is one of the innovations of Hasidic approaches to Jewish mysticism. It is worthwhile to compare this with the view of a late-nineteenth-century Hasidic master, R. Gershon Henokh Leiner of Radzin, who also wrote a systematic introduction to Hasidism. According to R. Gershon Henokh, Hasidism transcended medieval philosophy as well as Kabbalah by translating the intellectual and doctrinal concerns of these movements back into the existential or phenomenological language of Jewish devotional practice, from which they had originally sprung. I am fundamentally sympathetic to the presentation of this argument by Shaul Magid, *Hasidism on the Margin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003) 72–108.

²² This principle is frequently associated by Jewish mystical writers with Ps 121:5: “The Lord is your shield [or shadow] at your right hand.” Citing a *midrash* that makes use of this idea, R. Moses Cordovero gives evidence of its adoption by kabbalistic writers in the sixteenth century: “Just as your shadow, if you laugh at it, it laughs at you, and if you weep for it, it weeps along with you, and if you show it a face of outrage or of pleasure this is what it gives back, so the Holy One blessed be He is [like] your shadow. . . . Therefore, according to the actions that arouse the lower [i.e., the human being], so the upper [divine] will be aroused, for good or for ill” (*Pardes Rimmonim*, *Toledot Adam Sha'ar ha-Gadol* 5). See Idel’s discussion of a parallel passage in R. Meir Ibn Gabbai’s *Tola’at Yaaqov*, 4a in Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) 173–81, as well as 80–88 and 197–99. Idel argues that the Hasidic reworking of this concept focused more on divine emotions than on putative body parts, and returned to a less mechanistic and frankly theurgic view than that of the classical Kabbalah. “The theurgical element . . . was not rejected as in the ecstatic Kabbalah,” Idel cautions, “but was transposed onto the spiritual-emotive plane” (*ibid.*, 199). For Hasidic writers like Rabbi Shapira, this meant that the theme of broken-heartedness became *relatively* more important than the actual shedding of tears through ritual weeping.

²³ See Arthur Green, “The *Zaddik* as *Axis Mundi* in Later Judaism.” *JAAR* 45 (1977) 327–47 and Idel, *Hasidism*. “[T]he founders of Hasidism,” writes Seth Brody, “are the heirs of what can only be described as a spirituality of cosmic blessing. The classical kabbalistic tradition presents mystical praxis as a process of entrance into the divine, in order to serve as a living conduit for the infusion of its creative energy into the cosmos.” Seth Brody, “‘Open to Me the Gates of Righteousness’: the Pursuit of Holiness and Non-Duality in Early Hasidic Teaching.” *JQR* 89 (1998) 3–44, at 22.

dynasties of Hasidic leaders and often portrays himself as an expositor of the Hasidic tradition as a whole rather than any particular school.²⁴ In a fascinating pre-war discussion, he argues for a kind of pluralism among different Jewish mystical schools, noting that the cosmological structure portrayed by each is dependant upon the unique personality structure of a different great master. The term *partzufim*, he notes, refers both to the endless variability of human faces *and* to the differing articulations of the divine *anthropos* in Jewish mysticism.²⁵ Rabbi Shapira's own cosmology falls squarely within the mainstream of Polish Hasidic thought, but also betrays a strong conceptual influence from the Habad school.²⁶

A few primary terms dominate Rabbi Shapira's discussion of the emotions in Hasidic education. *Hitragshut* implies agitation or excitement and a degree of sensitivity to external stimuli. A whole section of his second volume on spiritual education, which is entitled "How to Become an Emotional Person ('ish mitragesh)," includes exercises designed to intentionalize and amplify the emotions that occur in daily life. "You will laugh and cry together," he promises his students at an early stage of their training, and he encourages them to let no emotion dissipate without first deploying it in their quest for spiritual development.²⁷ A moment of sadness over some trivial event should be seized and transformed into sadness over the exile of God and the Jewish people; a moment of mundane loneliness should be turned towards God in prayer. By its nature, *hitragshut* allows for mixed motives and ambivalence, which is not at all the case with *hitlahavut* or "burning enthusiasm," a term that is frequently invoked in Hasidic literature to connote a state of single-mindedness in which "you cannot restrain or hold yourself back, since all of you is inflamed and your whole self, the flames of your soul, are alight with God's fire."²⁸ If *hitragshut* applies to the emotions at almost any stage of training, *hitlahavut* is nearly always used to connote the attainment of higher devotional intensity through prayer.

On the specific importance of the *tzaddiq* in Rabbi Shapira's teaching, see Schweid, *From Ruin to Salvation*.

²⁴ See for instance Shapira, *Derekh ha-Melekh*, 79–83. Rabbi Shapira's father was the Hasidic leader R. Elimelekh of Grodzisk. Other ancestors include important early masters like R. Elimelekh of Lyzansk, the author of *No'am Elimelekh* (Lemberg, 1874) and R. Kalonymous Kalman Halevy Epstein of Krakow, the author of *Ma'or va-Shemesh* (Lemberg, 1890), for whom Rabbi Shapira was named. His father-in-law and cousin was the Rebbe of Koznitz, who took over young Kalonymos's education after the death of his father.

²⁵ Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 217–18.

²⁶ It is true that Rabbi Shapira's contemporary (and fellow Warsaw Ghetto inhabitant) Hillel Zeitlin rejects the influence of Habad on Rabbi Shapira's Hasidism, but this appears to be a stylistic impression based only on Rabbi Shapira's first published book, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*. References to Habad writers are fairly common in Rabbi Shapira's broader corpus, as are certain terminological and conceptual influences whose description would exceed the scope of this article. See Hillel Zeitlin, *Sifran shel Yehidim* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1979) 241–44. Some similarities with Habad teachings have already been noted by Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 17, 169.

²⁷ Shapira, *Hakhsharat ha-Avreikhim*, 44b–46a.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14–15. See Wacks, "Emotion and Enthusiasm."

Another analytically significant term is *hitpa'alut*, which is “the quality of being acted upon” or moved by an external force, much like the English term “affect,” and like “affect,” it can also be qualified by specific emotive terms such as “sadness” or “joy.” *Hitpa'alut ha-ka'as* is therefore the affect or passion of anger, which can denote an ecstasy of anger in some contexts.²⁹ But while Hasidic texts frequently invoke *hitpa'alut* to describe mystical states of various kinds, its first and primary meaning refers simply to the experience of emotion or passion in the Aristotelian sense of “something that is done to the thing of which it is predicated.”³⁰ This is the sense in which the word was first coined in the thirteenth century by Samuel Ibn Tibbon for his Hebrew rendition of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*, where it stood for the Arabic term *infi'al*. According to Maimonides, emotion was a property of changing, corporeal bodies that could not logically be predicated of the Unmoved Mover. Biblical language that seems to attribute affect of one kind or another to God is therefore always strictly metaphorical, and the ideal of *imitatio Dei* that Maimonides propounds entails a path of rational balance and resistance to agitation.³¹ One acts *as if* angry when necessary, according to Maimonides, but strives to remain always untouched by anger.³²

This ethos of restraint and equanimity is of course opposed in many ways to the emotional cosmology advocated by Rabbi Shapira and other Hasidic writers, but some important leaders, like Rabbi Dov Baer of Lubavitch (1773–1827), sought to reconcile the two by arguing that Maimonides’ rejection of divine *hitpa'alut* must refer to the transcendent Infinite or *'Ein Sof* that precedes emanation but not to the immanent and emotion-laden divinity that fills the Jewish mystical universe.³³ In 1831, Dov Baer’s “Tract on Ecstasy” or *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* criticized Hasidim

²⁹ The fact that *hitpa'alut* can sometimes be translated as ecstasy means that its correct translation in particular contexts must be carefully specified. It sometimes implies a greater intensity of emotion than mere *hitragshut*, as in Rabbi Shapira’s statement that while a student may be moved to *hitragshut* or agitation by the practice of specific divine commandments, a more intense experience of *hitpa'alut*—ecstasy is occasioned by study of “the Torah and the light of God” in its more potent, undifferentiated form. Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 21.

³⁰ On Aristotelian *pathos*, see for instance Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*, (trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred; New York: Penguin, 1986) 117–18. Ibn Tibbon’s explanation of the Hebrew neologism *hitpa'alut* as an Aristotelian concept appears in his glossary of foreign and unfamiliar words printed in most editions of his thirteenth century translation of Maimonides’ *Guide for the Perplexed*. Also see the glossary in Shlomo Pines’s translation of Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

³¹ See Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* I:54–55, at 123–29.

³² Maimonides, *Hilkhot De'ot* 2:3.

³³ Rabbi Dov Baer Schneersohn, In *Ma'anrei Admur ha-Emtsa'i: Derushei Hatunah* (2 vols.; New York: Kehot, 1988) 1:192. Rabbi Shapira may have been more comfortable with open dissension from Maimonides in part because, as Polen (“Divine Weeping,” 262) notes, his great-great grandfather, Rabbi Israel Hapstein of Kozienice (d. 1814), once reportedly asserted that Maimonides’ ruling on anthropomorphism caused “a great darkness” to overtake the Upper World, since “so many souls who had previously entered paradise were now banished on account of Maimonides’ decision that they were heretics, only to be restored later through the intervention of Rabbi Abraham ben David” [i.e., Rabad of Posquières, Maimonides’ most persistent twelfth-century critic]. Rabbi Shapira specifically

who sought ecstasy as an end in itself because their ultimate focus would remain the experiencing self rather than God.³⁴ An early stage of authentic *hitpa'alut*, on the other hand, is what Dov Baer calls the "goodly thought," referring to the attentiveness and attachment that one develops for an object of contemplation, "like a person who has received good news about a business project in which he is personally concerned [so that] the whole power of his mind becomes engaged in an ecstasy [*hitpa'alut*] . . . known as 'attachment of thought.'"³⁵ Attentiveness to "goodly thought" may develop into emotional longing at a later stage, before it finally gives way to selfless awareness of the divine presence. Rabbi Shapira's short work on contemplative practices, entitled "Disciples of the Goodly Thought," was clearly influenced by this formulation, although he emphasized the educational rather than theoretical implications of *hitpa'alut* and the rudimentary stages of practice appropriate to non-adepts or adepts-in-training.³⁶

Like the members of the Habad school whom he cites in this context, Rabbi Shapira preferred even negative forms of *hitpa'alut* such as anger and impatience (a "boiling disposition") over cold rationalism, because he believed that anger could be sublimated through training into spiritual longing and compassion, while cold affect signified that the soul was still deeply submerged or "hidden" by gross physicality.³⁷ By arousing the emotions and training them to be subjects of intentional control and reflection, the soul itself might gradually be made transparent to human experience as a primary conduit for divine influx and self-knowledge. While the naïve subject imagines that the body experiences stimuli (*hitpa'alut ha-hushim*) and feels emotion (*hitpa'alut ha-regesh*) in a direct and unmediated way, the adept comes to understand that *hitpa'alut* always connotes action upon the experiencing soul, which is sheathed within and enlivens the body, but which must be understood as an extension of divine vitality.³⁸ Understanding this in an experiential and not merely theoretical way is central to the theme of attainable

urges his followers to rely upon Rabad against Maimonides in the use of anthropomorphic and anthropopathic imagery in spiritual training (Shapira, *Bnei Mahashavah Tovah*, 25).

³⁴ *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* has been published in Rabbi Dov Beer Schneersohn, *Ma'amrei Admur ha-Emtsa'i: Kuntresim* (New York: Kehot, 1991) 37–196, and translated by Louis Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy* (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1963). *Hitpa'alut*—ecstasy remains an important theme of Habad Hasidism and its offshoots. For another, more insidious use of this concept in twentieth-century Jewish mysticism, see Don Seeman, "Violence, Ethics and Divine Honor in Modern Jewish Thought," *JAAR* 73 (2005) 1015–48.

³⁵ Schneersohn, *Kuntresim*, 82.

³⁶ Shapira, *Bnei Mahashavah Tovah*. Schweid, *From Ruin to Salvation*, 113, goes so far as to argue that Rabbi Shapira's careful attention to the spiritual attainment of the masses who cannot undertake complex training but can at least be filled with desire for intimacy with the divine, is "the whole of the new Hasidic pedagogic and didactic model" he innovated. How this differs from earlier Hasidic models however, awaits careful attention.

³⁷ See for example Shapira, *Hakhsharat ha-Avreikhim*, 9b–10a.

³⁸ Schweid, *From Destruction to Salvation*, suggests without elaboration that Rabbi Shapira was influenced in this regard by Kantian theories of sense perception.

prophecy that runs like a scarlet thread through all of Rabbi Shapira's pre-war and Ghetto writings.

Nervous Bodies, Prophetic Bodies

Prophecy was by no means an unusual subject for East European Jewish thinkers. In 1899, a young Hebrew writer named Mordecai Feierberg published a short, semi-autobiographical novel describing the turmoil of a young man named Nahman who struggled to prepare himself for prophecy through rigorous religious discipline.³⁹ As the story unfolds, Nahman's failure leads him to disillusionment and then despair at the continuing exile and persecution of the Jewish people. He becomes an advocate of Enlightenment accommodation with Western civilization and ultimately — when even that hope has collapsed under the pressure of anti-Semitic rejection — a mad prophet of Zionist rebirth among the “peoples of the East.” The novel's title, *Whither?* captures some of the despair experienced by this generation of Eastern European Jewish writers, who had broken with traditional life-ways but found no secure home in the outside world.⁴⁰ In many ways, Feierberg's protagonist represents the impetus — as well as the risk — behind Rabbi Shapira's educational project.

Like Rabbi Shapira's ideal student, Nahman attempts to attain prophetic insight through ascetic disciplines that include the self-conscious development of his imaginative and emotional faculties. In one of the novel's central passages, Feierberg describes Nahman's decision to seek prophecy after he experiences an ecstatic but wrenching vision (Alan Mintz calls it a “*rêverie*”) of Jerusalem in ruins, and decides to intercede with God on his people's behalf.⁴¹ These visions are close to the imaginative exercises that Rabbi Shapira would later prescribe for new initiates.⁴² Unlike Nahman or the novelist, however, Rabbi Shapira continued to believe in the redemptive power of prophecy and its emotional prerequisites even after the speedy redemption for which he had hoped had been denied. Feierberg's novel is just one more piece of evidence in support of Eliezer Schweid's contention that prophecy was a key metaphor in Jewish religious and political thought during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁴³ For mystics like Rabbi Shapira, prophecy was part of an integrated religious worldview replete with ritual and hermeneutic strategies for the confrontation with a difficult and increasingly dangerous modernity.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, like Rabbi Shapira, was the scion of an important Hasidic family in Poland between the wars who devoted himself to this topic. Born in Warsaw in 1907, Heschel left Poland just a few months before Hitler's invasion,

³⁹ M. Z. Feierberg, *Le'an?* (Tel-Aviv: Kitvei M. Z. Feierberg, 1949).

⁴⁰ Alan Mintz, *Banished from Their Father's Table: Loss of Faith and Hebrew Autobiography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴² See Shapira, *Hakhsharat ha-Avreikhim*, 33a–41b

⁴³ Eliezer Schweid, “Prophetic Mysticism in Twentieth Century Jewish Thought,” *Modern Judaism* 14 (1994) 139–74; *idem*, *Prophets for their People and Humanity* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999).

arriving in the United States in 1940. He eventually became a leading figure at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, where his evocative writings on the phenomenology of religious experience arguably won him more admirers than disciples.⁴⁴ The 1962 English adaptation of his pre-war German doctoral dissertation, *The Prophets*, bears close comparison with Rabbi Shapira's corpus, because in it he links the idea of biblical prophecy to the study and discipline of the emotions and to divine anthropopathism. "The characteristic of the prophets," Heschel writes, "is not foreknowledge of the future, but insight into the present pathos of God."⁴⁵ The prophet is "*homo sympathetikos*," [*sic*] existing in a state in which "man is open to the presence and emotion of the transcendent Subject. He carries within himself the awareness of what is happening to God."⁴⁶ This is virtually the same "mystical psychology" identified by Scholem and others with the Hasidic revolution in Jewish mysticism, and it is entirely in keeping with Rabbi Shapira's outlook. Although ostensibly teaching the history of biblical religion, Heschel's *Prophets* must also be understood as an extension or restatement of the Hasidic emphasis on prophecy as a continuous core of Jewish religious experience.⁴⁷

Rabbi Shapira treats prophecy in his pre-war writings as an ideal *telos* of Jewish spiritual practice as well as a pragmatic educational goal related to the Hasidic resistance against secularism. "We don't wish to turn you into a prophet," he tells his young readers in 1932, "or even into a master of the Holy Spirit—at least not all at once. But a prince who has been thrown into a disgusting dungeon must have become very corrupt indeed if he is not at least anxious over his fate and does not yearn for his previous condition."⁴⁸ This theme grows increasingly explicit (and indeed urgent) in subsequent chapters. At one point, Rabbi Shapira argues that Hasidic enthusiasm and biblical prophecy lie on a single continuum of attempts to leverage *hitpa'alut* ecstasy into a revelation of the divine vitality at the heart of all things. In an appended essay for older students he writes, "An Israelite who purifies his body" through Hasidic discipline "cannot help but be aroused to higher thoughts and more exalted yearnings, to peer beyond his body's mask."⁴⁹

⁴⁴ On Heschel's phenomenology of religious experience, see Edward K. Kaplan, "Abraham Joshua Heschel," in *Interpreters of Judaism in the Late Twentieth Century* (ed. Steven Katz; New York: B'nai B'rith, 1993) 131–50; Lawrence Perlman, *Abraham Joshua Heschel's Idea of Revelation* (Atlanta: Georgia State University Press, 1989).

⁴⁵ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (2 vols.; San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1962) 1:11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.89.

⁴⁷ Schweid, *From Ruin to Salvation*, 112–14, shows that Rabbi Shapira viewed Hasidism as the culmination of a graded historical process in which biblical prophets, later rabbis and kabbalistic sages each contributed to a unique phase of cosmic *tiqqun* or repair. These movements continue and complete one another rather than marking strong institutional breaks. Compare Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Prophetic Inspiration after the Prophets: Maimonides and Other Medieval Authorities* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1996) and Benjamin D. Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation," *JBL* 115 (1996) 31–47.

⁴⁸ Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 113–14.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

The “body” to which these texts refer is a standard kabbalistic adaptation of the “unified hierarchical scheme” that Greco-Islamic medicine bequeathed to medieval Judaism.⁵⁰ It joined physiology to cosmology through a set of distinctive and perduring metaphors including that of differentiated “vessels” that channel vitality to the different organs of the human body:

The narrow end of a funnel enters the glass with its wide part (which actually contains most of the liquid) remaining above. Just so, [divine] light and holiness . . . descend from the highest of worlds, and are contracted . . . in accord with what the body, depending on its degree of purification, has the capacity to receive. . . . [This “light”] becomes clothed [i.e., takes form] as *neshamah* [vitality enabling thought] in the brain; as *ruah* [vitality enabling speech and emotion] in the heart; and as *nefesh* [vitality enabling animation] in the liver [i.e., blood]. Each vessel [organ] receives only the level of holiness that it is capable of receiving.⁵¹

The heart is thus a bodily seat of passions (*ruah*) that are themselves “drawn down from on high,” making the body’s condition crucial for the attainment of prophetic sympathy. Heschel likewise notes that the term *ruah* (literally “wind” or “breath”) denotes emotion in biblical texts, and that the prophet Hosea is described as *’ish ha-ruah*, or “man filled with divine pathos” for just this reason.⁵² Rabbi Shapira’s innovation was to tie this emotional cosmology to a contemporary theory of nerves and nervousness that had not yet been invoked by his predecessors.

Prophecy, for Rabbi Shapira, is dependant on both contingent and essential factors. While he considered discipline and training to be crucial, he also thought that Jews were inherently more susceptible to prophetic agitation, and he was the first to ground this distinction in a twentieth-century medical idiom of nervousness. He portrayed the nerves, *’atzabim* in Hebrew (occasionally simply transliterating “nerves” into Hebrew characters), as the most ethereal of all corporeal organs and therefore the best suited to mediate body and spirit through an emotional medium. He was by all accounts well acquainted with contemporary medicine, which portrayed the nervous system as a fragile receptive network susceptible to impression (and potential overload) by external trauma.⁵³ Indeed, Nehemia Polen recounts that Rabbi Shapira’s friend Dr. Aaron Solowiejczyk, who was head of surgery at Warsaw’s Jewish hospital, saw to it that the rabbi’s prescriptions (based

⁵⁰ See Byron Good and Mary-Jo Delvecchio Good, “The Comparative Study of Greco-Islamic Medicine: The Integration of Medicine into Local Symbolic Contexts.” in *Paths to Asian Medical Knowledge* (ed. Allan Young and Charles Leslie; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 257–71.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁵² Heschel, *The Prophets* 1:97.

⁵³ “In my meetings with people who knew Rabbi Shapira,” writes Polen, “interviewees would almost invariably place great stress on the Rabbi’s medical knowledge, clinical expertise, and ability to write pharmacologically precise prescriptions” (*The Holy Fire*, 160). Also see S. Don-Yahiya’s somewhat hagiographic work on Rabbi Shapira’s brother, *Admor Halutz* (Tel-Aviv: Moreshet, 1961) 295.

on autodidactic medical knowledge) were honored at local pharmacies—even though Hasidim sometimes preferred to keep his signature for its talismanic power rather than having their prescriptions filled. Rabbi Shapira was aware that some observers would cynically attribute his healing efficacy to the “power of suggestion” but remarked that he preferred the Hasidic idiom of “simple faith.”⁵⁴ In addition to sensory stimuli, he argued that human nerves were receptive to the diffuse presence of divinity or *'elohut* that radiates through all things, vibrating with an emotional vitality that allows *homo sympathetikos* to emerge. Yet this framework, in which authoritative religious and medical discourses coalesce, also allowed nervous disorder to emerge for the first time as a properly religious dilemma requiring explanation.

Like tuberculosis and other epoch-defining maladies, nervous overload carried ambivalent and sometimes contradictory meanings at the turn of the century. George Beard's 1881 treatise *American Nervousness* portrayed neurasthenia as a troublesome but necessary consequence of America's frantic industrial capitalism, a sign as well as a symptom of modernity's promise. In Europe as well as North America, nervous energy was often portrayed as a sign of feminine weakness that could also however be imbued with positive meaning as a mark of special moral and emotional sensitivity. It is not surprising that Jews were often portrayed as nervous and effeminate in the scientific and popular literature of the day.⁵⁵ “Nothing is more conspicuous among them [the Jews],” wrote Victorian essayist William Lecky, “than their unhealthy coloring, their frail, bent and feeble bodies. . . . Their nervous organization is extremely sensitive, and . . . they are very liable to insanity and to other nervous and brain disorders.”⁵⁶ For Lecky, nervousness was related to Jews' effeminate hatred of violence and “peculiar horror from blood.”⁵⁷ Yet Rabbi Shapira inverted this charge by arguing that while Jews were in fact prone to nervousness, this was a result of their special readiness for prophetic agitation, which could only be controlled and shaped through ritual discipline. It was religious

⁵⁴ Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 4. Healing was not uncommon among Hasidic masters in Eastern Europe, although we lack reliable accounts of the specific forms that this practice took. See Ira Robinson, “The Tarler Rebbe of Lodz and His Medical Practice,” *Polin* 11 (1998) 53–61. R. Gershon Henokh Leiner of Radzin was also an autodidact known for writing prescriptions that were honored by pharmacies. See David Margolit, “Great Hasidic Leaders as Doctors: R. Gershon Henokh of Radzhin,” *Korot* 7 (1977) 297–307; Alan Brill, *Thinking God: The Mysticism of Rabbi Tzadok of Lublin* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2002) 38–40. For contemporary ethnographic studies of Hasidic healing, see Littlewood and Dein, “The Effectiveness of Words”; Simon Dein, “The Power of Words: Healing Narratives among Lubavitcher Hasidim,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 16 (2002) 41–63 and idem, *Religion and Healing among the Lubavitch Community in Stamford Hill, North London* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2004).

⁵⁵ See Sander Gilman, *Freud, Race and Gender* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 95.

⁵⁶ Cited in Elliot Horowitz, “The Vengeance of the Jews was Stronger Than Their Avarice: Modern Historians and the Persian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614,” *Jewish Social Studies* 4 (1998) 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

training, rather than effeminacy, that made Jews less susceptible than Gentiles to bouts of nervous violence.⁵⁸

It was, in fact, only the absence of prophetic training that sometimes transformed Jewish nervousness for Rabbi Shapira into a pathological condition that required treatment. “We can at least say,” he writes, “that Israelites are by nature prone to nervousness . . . because they are the descendants of prophets.”

If they use this capacity for divine service, they can reach a very high level, and even attain the Holy Spirit [i.e., a weak form of prophecy]. If not, it is like the case of a person who is born with a powerful mind. When he does not use this intelligence, he risks madness. Thus it is that emotional excitement [*hitragshur*], which is a preparation for exalted service through self-annihilation, ecstasy and the Holy Spirit—can also be transformed into mischief and nervous agitation.⁵⁹

The pre-war essays make only passing reference to psychologists (*hakhmei ha-nefesh*) and to physicians who attempt to “weaken [i.e., calm] the nerves” of those whose “thought has been damaged and impaired” through nervous exhaustion, but these references are crucial because they help to map the convergences in Rabbi Shapira’s thought between medical and spiritual concerns focused on the emotional life.⁶⁰ Techniques designed to quiet the mind through physical exercise and avoidance of mental agitation were important elements of contemporary thinking about nervous disorder, as they had been of nineteenth-century “rest therapies” applied to disorders of the moral will.⁶¹ Rabbi Shapira’s innovation was to link these medical ideas with Hasidic ritual cosmology through meditative techniques designed to quiet and subdue the agitated mind into readiness for a prophetic influx.⁶² A short essay written by one of his students in 1936 (“On Cultivating Inner

⁵⁸ Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 93–94.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Also see Shapira, *Tzav ve-Zeruz*, 9–10, where Rabbi Shapira writes that while the soul always seeks emotional agitation [*hitragshur*], the form that such agitation takes is subject to training and choice.

⁶⁰ Shapira, *Bnei Mahashavah Tovah*, 14. Rabbi Shapira’s adoption of nervous disorder should be compared with the adoption of neurasthenia by Chinese doctors during the first half of the twentieth century, when it had already begun to decline as a diagnostic category among Western psychiatrists. Neurasthenia proved durable in China precisely because it was assimilated to traditional Chinese concepts of socio-somatic imbalance, just as Rabbi Shapira was drawn to nerve theory because it linked traditional Hasidic cosmology with authoritative medical discourse. See Arthur Kleinman, *Social Origins of Disease and Distress: Depression, Neurasthenia and Pain in Modern China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); *idem*, *The Illness Narratives* (Boston: Basic Books, 1988).

⁶¹ See for instance Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).

⁶² Shapira, *Bnei Mahashavah Tovah*, 14. Brill, *Thinking God*, 371, contrasts Rabbi Shapira’s approach usefully with that of earlier Polish Hasidim like R. Zadok ha-Cohen of Lublin (1823–1900) as well as Lithuanian Jews like R. Israel Salanter (1810–1883), who had begun to translate the traditional metaphysics of the soul into a descriptive psychological language without, however, basing this on contemporary medical theories drawn from the broader Gentile society. “This development was short-lived,” writes Brill. “When modern Jewry accepted Western science, these Jewish psychologies

Quiet”) describes his induction of select disciples into these methods, and attests to the urgency with which he viewed their propagation.⁶³

Rabbi Shapira’s dialectical concern with the necessity and danger of emotional agitation was thus framed from the outset by a distinctive junction of Hasidic cosmology and cosmopolitan medicine grounded in ritual practice. Emotion was conceived neither as a purely inner experience nor as a component of discursive meaning and shared personal significance, but was above all an efficacious *presence* or vitality endowed with real power to enliven the world, to link the divine and human realms—or better, to reveal their deep intrinsic unity. “Just as all of the other activities of the soul are revealed to us through actions of the bodily organs,” writes Rabbi Shapira before the war, “so too it is with the emotions. It is the soul that is revealed by means of the body and its nerves. . . .”⁶⁴ This being the case, it should come as little surprise that his later response to crisis in the Warsaw Ghetto would not be limited to what Geertz has called “the problem of suffering”—the quest to make suffering meaningful—but extended also to the problem of efficacy, the “originary cry for help” (Levinas 1988), which precedes articulate meaning and may persist even when language and meaning have apparently failed.⁶⁵

■ “Useless Suffering” in the Warsaw Ghetto

Rabbi Shapira’s wartime essays, or *derashot*, were buried in the Ghetto before his murder and published several decades later by surviving Hasidim under the title *’Esh Kodesh* (“Sacred Fire”). The first essay dates from the Jewish New Year of September 1939, shortly before the occupation of Warsaw, which was soon followed by a German order to segregate Jews into separate Ghettos, but over a year before nervous German public health officials ordered the Ghetto to be literally walled off against the outbreak of infectious disease that might compromise German troops.⁶⁶ Even though the war had only just begun when Rabbi Shapira began writing, it is well to remember that some of his most devastating personal losses would be suffered during this period. His daughter-in-law and his sister-in-law (the latter had been visiting from Palestine) were killed outright during the initial German shelling, but his only son Elimelekh was mortally wounded on Yom Kippur and then lingered for a week without medical care until the festival of Tabernacles, or *Sukkot*, when he finally expired. Upon his death, Rabbi Shapira is said to have led

came to an abrupt end.” By the time Rabbi Shapira formulated his ideas on nervousness, according to this reading, modernization of Jews in Poland had reached the point where a truly compelling religious psychology was likely to borrow more freely from the idioms of contemporary medicine. While this is an intriguing and intuitively correct view, it will require further comparative study across a broad spectrum of Hasidic (and other) Jewish thinkers.

⁶³ Shapira, *Derekh ha-Melekh*, 406.

⁶⁴ Shapira, *Hakhsharat ha-Avreikhim*, 10b–11a.

⁶⁵ Levinas, “Useless Suffering.”

⁶⁶ Christopher Browning, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 145–68.

the holiday prayers with their usual exuberance, after admonishing the Hasidim that Jewish law permitted no public display of mourning during the festival. Already the dynamic of emotional control and its profound personal cost, which would characterize so many of his later Ghetto essays, was here in evidence. "This war has already defeated me," he was heard to remark; "we can only pray to God that the community of Israel outlasts the war."⁶⁷

Early Ghetto sermons focused insistently on the problem of suffering that exceeds all normal or meaningful bounds, suffering that resists the sense of being "borne" or "suffered" because it overwhelms the ramified subjectivity that a stance of bearing presumes. In early November, a biblical text from Isaiah provided Rabbi Shapira with a framework for reflection upon the distinction between sufferers who were merely "exiled" but could, with effort, sustain a coherent subjectivity, and those who were "lost" because their power of self-recognition had already been shattered by radical suffering beyond repair:

Even now, when troubles multiply to such an extent that the beards of Jews have simply been shaved off, leaving them unrecognizable on an external level, so too their interiority changes, leaving them unrecognizable from within. The person loses and cannot recognize himself (*er farlirt zikh*). He cannot feel the way he did a year ago on the Sabbath or on a weekday before the prayers, or during prayer itself. Now, he is trampled and crushed, until he cannot even feel whether he is a Jew or a human being, or whether he is an animal. He has no reality left to feel. He is lost.⁶⁸

The public humiliation of forced shaving points for Rabbi Shapira to a deeper and more terrible attack on the grounds of subjectivity and meaning-making that leaves the sufferer with "no reality left to feel." The sermon may conclude with a promise of ultimate divine rescue (God too, must perform the *mitzvah* of returning "lost objects" to their owners), but this hardly justifies identifying the essay with a stance of Hasidic optimism or unwavering faith. What truly stands out in these Ghetto writings is their unprecedented depiction of psychic collapse and the desperate struggle by their author to overcome his gathering silence and despair.⁶⁹

Rabbi Shapira's depictions of collapse and near-collapse were unprecedented in the rabbinic literature of the time. What distinguishes the essays that comprise *'Esh Kodesh* from most other essays by rabbinic authors that have been preserved was the extent to which their author was willing to engage the problem of meaninglessness and collapse as an irreducible core of Ghetto experience. Testimony collected by

⁶⁷ See Aharon Surasky, "Mi-Toledot ha-admor ha-Kadosh Maran Rabi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira z"l," a somewhat hagiographic work published as an appendix to Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*; also described in Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 10–11.

⁶⁸ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 11. "I marvel at the pious Jews who sacrifice themselves by wearing beards and the traditional frock coats," writes Emmanuel Ringelblum in November, 1940. "They are subject to abuse." Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum* (ed. and trans. Jacob Sloan; New York: Schocken, 1958) 83.

⁶⁹ See Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 14.

the Ghetto historian and diarist Emmanuel Ringelblum attests to the desperation with which many Jews in Warsaw turned to numerological speculation or to the search for hidden portents concealed within sacred texts and current events, but Rabbi Shapira scrupulously avoids these themes, just as he avoids the burgeoning messianism of Hasidic rabbis such as Joseph Isaac Schneersohn of Lubavitch, who had already escaped to New York, or Shlomo Teichtal, who wrote from pre-invasion Budapest.⁷⁰ Premature messianism, notes Rabbi Shapira with empathy in one of his pre-war essays, is like a man rushing passionately to get someplace, only to smash and wound his head on the doorpost.⁷¹ In the Warsaw Ghetto, each false promise or unrequited hope brought Jews closer to an ultimate and unfathomable despair.⁷²

Scholars have debated whether Rabbi Shapira articulates a coherent ideological response to suffering in *'Esh Kodesh* or merely a contingent and sometimes contradictory set of homiletic responses to his followers' immediate pastoral needs.⁷³ Yet important as this debate may be, it also obscures something significant about Rabbi Shapira's overall project, which also links the pre-war and Ghetto writings. While it may be possible to abstract Hasidic ideologies or doctrines from Hasidic texts, writers like Rabbi Shapira sought explicitly to train the subjectivity of their readers for divine service, which in Rabbi Shapira's idiom meant training them for prophecy. These concerns, which before the war focused on the "enflaming" and sanctification of emotion as divine vitality, necessarily shifted in the Ghetto context to a concern with the management and sometimes damping of emotion for the preservation of humanity and cosmos alike. The ritual and hermeneutic strategies portrayed in *'Esh Kodesh* are keyed primarily to the problem of efficacy rather

⁷⁰ Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, 56, 64, 111–12, 198–99, 215. See Gershon Greenberg, "Redemption after Holocaust According to Mahane Israel Lubavitch, 1940–1945," *Modern Judaism* 12 (1992) 61–84; Schweid, *From Ruin to Salvation*, 126; Piekartz, *Ideological Trends*, 379.

⁷¹ Shapira, *Derekh ha-Melekh*, 187–88. "The greater his desire [for the redemption] was," writes Rabbi Shapira in this undated, pre-war sermon for Rosh Hashanah, "the more he falls and disintegrates, may God have mercy—as in 'my soul is sick with the love of you.'" Such a person is not wrong to be filled with love and desire, but grows ill from lack of strength to bear its weight—yet if he weeps with worry that perhaps God has cast him off, concludes Rabbi Shapira, this may paradoxically serve as a sign that God is drawing him close.

⁷² Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, 64 writes that "September 27, 1940, was the day on which, according to a nameless rabbi's prediction, 'something would happen and the Jews would be really and truly saved.' It was the date of the New Order Pact." When the redemption (reputed to involve Hitler's death) failed to come and was actually the occasion of increased persecution, "a man called Fridlajn committed suicide with his wife."

⁷³ Piekartz, *Ideological Trends*, 378 asserts that *'Esh Kodesh* is based on "ideas and fragments of ideas" drawn and paraphrased from earlier Jewish literature. He also asserts that Rabbi Shapira's biblical exegesis is "nothing more than an external framework meant to support his listeners, to strengthen their spirit and their power of resistance to the terrible decrees and especially to shape their faith in the God of Israel and his providence" (*ibid.*, 377). Polen (*The Holy Fire*, xviii) responds with some justification that "Piekartz evidently reads *'Esh Kodesh* as little more than a collection of unrelated homilies without a unifying center. While Piekartz does note the date of the *derashot* he cites, he misses what in our view is the central feature of *'Esh Kodesh*: the diachronic unfolding of key ideas, which gradually crystallize to form a cohesive and characteristic theological response."

than meaning, and to the defense of embodied human subjectivity against collapse. Two of the most important of these strategies, whose related yet incommensurate demands haunt Rabbi Shapira until the closing pages of his wartime corpus, might be called “suffering for the other” and “weeping in secret places.”

Suffering for the Other

The Jewish liturgical calendar for the Sabbath of November 4, 1939 called for the public reading of the Torah portion that begins with Genesis 23, describing the death and burial of the matriarch Sarah in the city of Hebron. The biblical narrative offers no explanation for Sarah’s death or for its juxtaposition with the “Binding of Isaac” in Genesis 22. Some ancient exegetes argued that Sarah’s death follows upon Isaac’s binding in order to teach that Sarah died from grief or shock when she learned that her husband had tried to slaughter their only son upon God’s altar, and it is this *midrash*, rather than the biblical text itself, to which Rabbi Shapira turns after a brief prologue on the nature of suffering:

The word “*brit*” [covenant] is juxtaposed in the Bible with both salt and with suffering.⁷⁴ . . . Just as salt in proper measure preserves the meat, but in excess makes it impossible to enjoy, so suffering should come in proper measure, so that a person has the capacity to receive it. Suffering should be blended with mercy.⁷⁵

This teaching, which Rabbi Shapira attributes to his grandfather, R. Kalonymos Epstein of Krakow, implies that suffering itself can be described as a form of divine vitality that need not be viewed as inimical to human welfare so long as it is “blended” with mercy (*rahamim*) and experienced in “proper measure.”⁷⁶ But having established a traditional Hasidic framework for thinking about suffering, Rabbi Shapira then veers into uncharted territory by arguing that Moses himself organized the biblical narrative to juxtapose Sarah’s death with Isaac’s “Binding” (*‘aqedah*) precisely in order to call attention to the fact that Sarah had *not* been called upon by God to suffer “in proper measure,” but far in excess of that limit:

[That is why] Moses, our faithful shepherd, juxtaposed Sarah’s death in the Torah with the Binding of Isaac. It was in order to exonerate us; to show what

⁷⁴ *b. Ber.* 5a, which cites Lev 2:13 and Deut 28:69.

⁷⁵ Shapira, *’Esh Kodesh*, 10.

⁷⁶ See *Ma’or va-Shemesh* on Exod 6:3, citing an even earlier teaching by R. Menahem Mendl of Rymanov. The kabbalistic-theurgic context of this teaching in *Ma’or va-Shemesh* is far more explicit than it is in *’Esh Kodesh*, where technical kabbalistic terminology is often slipped into discussions that admit of more prosaic readings, perhaps because of Rabbi Shapira’s conscious effort to write for initiates as well as beginners. Similar language of the dialectic between *din* (judgment) and *rahamim* (mercy) is also evident in some other wartime writings, but these typically assert the inherent metaphysical balance of the universe, rather than the experience of utter imbalance and excessive suffering emphasized by Rabbi Shapira. See for instance Gershon Greenberg, “A Musar Response to the Holocaust: Yehezkel Sarna’s *Le’teshuva Ule’tekuma* of 4 December 1944,” *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 7 (1997) 101–38.

can happen, God forbid, when a person is made to suffer beyond measure. It was through excessive suffering that Sarah's soul expired. And if this was true for Sarah, that great saint, who for all that was unable to withstand her harsh affliction, how much more so for us!⁷⁷

Relaying the tale of Sarah's death through "too much suffering" is the Torah's strategy for exonerating future generations who would also one day face trials too terrible to withstand. This is a humane reading, which sides with human frailty in the face of divine power, and implicates Moses himself in teaching God a lesson, as it were, about human limitations.⁷⁸

"Excess suffering" cannot be blamed on the sufferer, according to Rabbi Shapira, but God can be called to account for imposing it. Rabbi Shapira goes still further, insisting (with no obvious exegetical need) that Sarah exercised a paradoxical agency in her own demise, *allowing* herself to perish from grief so that her death would call attention to the erasure of agency on the part of those who would later be overwhelmed by suffering and grief:

It is also possible to suggest that Sarah herself, in taking Isaac's binding so much to heart that her soul expired, did so for the good of Israel. In order to show God that an Israelite cannot be made to suffer beyond measure. And that even a person who remains alive after his affliction, through God's mercy, must still lose portions of his vitality, his mind and spirit. What difference does it make to me if I suffer a full or a partial death?⁷⁹

Sarah is thus complicit in her own death because "she took the Binding of Isaac so much to heart" when she might instead have distanced herself from grief over her son for the sake of continued well-being. Rabbi Shapira portrays her as the mirror image of his own pre-war focus on the dangers of emotional quietude, since her destruction comes from a self-willed superabundance of empathy and emotional agitation. By allowing pain to defeat her rather than bracketing emotion, Sarah models a kind of agency whose strength is in vulnerability, in the practical knowledge of human fragility, and in recognizing the limits of meaning in suffering. This is an especially powerful example of "suffering for the other," because the matriarch in this reading allows shattering pain to defeat her as a lesson to God for the sake of other humans.

Sarah's death must nevertheless be contrasted with the traditional Hasidic valorization of martyrdom accompanied by proper intention (*kavvanah*) and

⁷⁷ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 10.

⁷⁸ Without mentioning Rabbi Shapira, Aviva Zornberg argues that a long interpretive tradition links the exploration of Sarah's death to themes of meaninglessness and frailty in the face of near-catastrophe by Jewish authors. See Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg "Cries and Whispers," in *Beginning Anew: A Woman's Companion to the High Holy Days* (ed. Gail Twersky Reimer and Judith A. Kates; New York: Touchstone, 1997) 174–200. A similar theme is raised by *'Esh Kodesh*, 177, where Moses argues before God that the suffering of the Jewish people in Egypt will make it impossible for them to believe in his message.

⁷⁹ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 10. The phrase on "full or partial death" is a paraphrase of b. *B. Qam.* 65a.

heroic resolve. The traditional martyr is defeated only in body but not in spirit, imparting strength of conviction to others. In his pre-war writings, Rabbi Shapira himself encourages students to undertake a contemplative technique popularized by his famous ancestor R. Elimelekh of Lyzhansk, an early Hasidic leader who promoted the visualization of martyrdom described by earlier Jewish mystics as an adjunct to prayer.⁸⁰ In passages from the pre-war writings, students are taught to visualize themselves carrying the wood, leaping onto the pyre and so-forth, for the sake of God's unity and oneness.⁸¹ Yet with only a few exceptions, this theme is minimized in the wartime essays.⁸² In October of 1940, Rabbi Shapira goes so far as to argue that contemporary Jews are being murdered completely outside the traditional martyrdom paradigm because they lack any redemptive "intent" of their own. This might seem to rob their deaths of religious significance, except that Rabbi Shapira finds even here a hint of sacrificial efficacy. It may be true, he writes, that the biblical patriarch Abraham's intention to sacrifice his only son to God was frustrated by divine intervention, but contemporary Jews complete the circle by giving *their* lives without any volition whatsoever—perfect *ma'aseh* (action) to consummate Abraham's perfect *kavannah* (intent).⁸³ To the extent that there is religious agency here, it is measured by the span of generations rather than individual lives, and in pure passivity.

Sarah is available to Rabbi Shapira as an icon for Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto precisely because her death is *not* portrayed as a traditional martyr's death, with all of the implications of spiritual grandeur and powerful agency such a death would imply. Like many deaths that Rabbi Shapira must have witnessed in Warsaw, Sarah's death was unheroic and religiously unremarkable. She perished when suffering overwhelmed her defenses, yet she also *allowed* meaninglessness to engulf her for the sake of others who would one day fail to withstand their own challenges

⁸⁰ On the contemplation of martyrdom among the sixteenth-century kabbalists in Safed, see R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, *Joseph Caro: Lawyer and Mystic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962) 151–54. This spiritual technique gained popularity among later Hasidim. See Michael Fishbane, "The Imagination of Death in Jewish Spirituality," in *Death, Ecstasy and Other-Worldly Journeys* (ed. John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). It is important to remember, however, that martyrdom was a contested virtue even within the Hasidic fold, as described by Seeman, "Emotion, Martyrdom and the Work of Ritual," and Schindler, *Hasidic Responses*, 59–66.

⁸¹ Among many other passages on this theme written before the war, see Shapira, *Hakhsharot ha-Avreikhim*, 15b, 28b–30a and 68a–70b, the latter of which include a set of imaginative exercises to accompany the recitation of the *Shema Yisrael* prayer.

⁸² While Rabbi Akiva's martyrdom by Rome does constitute a frequent theme of Rabbi Shapira's wartime essays (see Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 67–69), these include few exhortations to emulate or to visualize Rabbi Akiva in the manner of the pre-war tracts. One exception is 'Esh Kodesh, 8–9, which dates to the Sabbath of September 16, 1939, in which Rabbi Shapira notes that correct spiritual preparation can free a martyr of death's agony, a theme to which he returned briefly toward the end of his Ghetto writings.

⁸³ Shapira, 'Esh Kodesh, 71–74. Piekarz, *Ideological Trends*, 396 argues that this teaching is unprecedented. Compare Schweid, *From Ruin to Salvation*, 129.

of radical suffering. This does not mean that images of traditional martyrdom are absent from *'Esh Kodesh*, as earlier studies have noted. But writers attuned primarily to the continuities between Rabbi Shapira's oeuvre and those of other traditionalist writers tend to overlook his subtle and sometimes radical innovations, including the frequency with which he points toward configurations of human experience that lack the signs of religious authentication or "meaningfulness" that other rabbinic authors of the period almost always seem to impose.⁸⁴ Schweid has argued convincingly that Rabbi Shapira's phenomenological realism was an attempt to identify with his Hasidim in their difficulties, and perhaps also a strategy to stave off despair by objectifying his own pain.⁸⁵ Yet I would add that there is also another, more organic basis to Rabbi Shapira's realism with regard to suffering, which is his longstanding concern for the depiction and training of affective states through which divine vitality flows.⁸⁶

It cannot be insignificant that Rabbi Shapira's own mother Hannah Berakhah also died during the early days of the German occupation in October 1939, allegedly "of a broken heart" or "heart attack."⁸⁷ Polen's citation of a Yiddish article published in the New York *Forward* in 1940 helps to emphasize the implicit contrast between the portrayal of Hannah Berakhah's death and that of Rabbi Shapira's own apparent fortitude and self-control during this period:

So the Piaseczner Rebbe lost, in the period of a few days, his only son, his mother, his daughter-in-law, and his sister-in-law. As there was no one else to say *Kaddish* for those who had died, the Rebbe is now reciting *Kaddish* for all of them. . . . The stricken Rebbe, however, is not broken in morale or

⁸⁴ On some of the important mainstream rabbinic responses, see Gershon Greenberg, "Ontic Division and Religious Survival: Wartime Palestinian Orthodoxy and the Holocaust (Hurban)," *Modern Judaism* 14 (1994) 21–61; idem, "Elhanan Wasserman's Response to the Growing Catastrophe"; idem, "A Musar Response to the Holocaust." These responses included a pronounced messianism, alongside the argument that Jewish assimilation was to be blamed for arousing divine punishment and Gentile rejection, and that the terrible suffering being visited upon the Jewish people might serve to return them to the proper path. With respect to Rabbi Shapira, by contrast, Schweid (*From Ruin to Salvation*, 126–27) notes that "The bitter truth that became clear to him is therefore that sufferings do not generally bring a person to religious ascendance. On the contrary, beyond a certain level, they render [a person] insensitive."

⁸⁵ Ibid., 105–7.

⁸⁶ This is made explicit in the eighth chapter of *Hakhsharat ha-Avreikhim*, 37a–38b, where Rabbi Shapira instructs students in a technique of "expansive thought" through guided imaging during the early stages of prophetic training. Following earlier Talmudic and mystical practice, Rabbi Shapira urges the adept-in-training to meditate upon the day of death, but he goes further than most writers in providing a detailed example of what such a meditation might be like, replete with images of the illness and suffering that precede extinction. Themes which later resurface in the Ghetto writings include "pain which is so great that his thought cannot contain it, for he never knew that such difficult and bitter afflictions existed in the world, and he cannot bear them. After a difficult and bitter night such as this, he feels as if his afflictions have already smashed his body and disincorporated his limbs. Death and the grave consume the body and destroy it, and he comes to know that this destruction begins with his affliction while he still lives. . . ."

⁸⁷ See Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 97.

spirit. He has remained in Warsaw, conducts *tish* [the ritual sharing of food] with his *hasidim*, learns Torah throughout the day, and is currently writing a book [*'Esh Kodesh?*]. The Piaseczner *hasidim* marvel at the remarkable self control of their Rebbe.⁸⁸

It is difficult to know what sources this account may have drawn upon, yet the parallel between the news report and themes raised in *'Esh Kodesh* itself is remarkable. While the *Forward* praises Rabbi Shapira's heroic fortitude and productivity as a communal leader, there is good evidence from the wartime essays that Rabbi Shapira himself remained painfully torn between the model of suffering presented by Sarah and his own celebrated steadfastness, which required a certain emotional deadening toward his own suffering and that of others.

In the essay on Sarah's death, for example, Rabbi Shapira obliquely raises but then quietly rejects the possibility that Sarah should be viewed as a kind of suicide because she "sinned against the remaining years of life allotted her" by failing to enact the psychic distancing that would have allowed her to survive. She did what she did for the sake of others, he writes, so she cannot be held blameworthy.⁸⁹ In his final essay for the Jewish liturgical year that ended in late September 1941, by contrast, he describes the psychic deadening and collapse of self that paradoxically allowed sufferers like him to continue to function in the Warsaw Ghetto:

⁸⁸ Ibid., 11–12. "*Tish*" literally means "table." Schindler, *Hasidic Responses*, 82, supposes that it was during his sharing of food at *tish* that Rabbi Shapira delivered the sermons that later were published as *'Esh Kodesh*. He also describes the heroism of various Hasidic leaders who maintained the custom of *tish* even once it had been outlawed by the Nazis. Rabbi Eliezer Horowitz is said to have conducted *tish* with his Hasidim at the edge of the open grave into which they were soon to be shot. Rabbi Shapira discusses the meaning of the Hasidic "table" at some length in his pre-war sermon for the holiday of *Simhat Torah* 1930 (*Derekh ha-Melekh*, 284–86). "[S]omeone who transforms his body and his eating into [divine] service," writes Rabbi Shapira, "his table becomes for him like the priests eating [the sacrifices] . . . until the one who leads the *tish* and those who sit with him at his *tish* feel [*margishim*] a kind of trembling in holiness, since they feel love, fear, joy and connectedness all together at the table, 'May the glory of God be forever, may God rejoice in His creations' [Ps 104:31]—not a [divine] service that is in the heavens alone, but a service that is *with* the world of [mundane] action." The Hasidic *tish* is thus an embodiment of many of the major themes of Rabbi Shapira's worldview and pre-war educational strategy. See Aharon Wertheim, *Halakhot ve-Halikhut ba-Hasidut* (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1993) 165–69, and Joel Hecker, "Eating and the Ritualized Body in Medieval Jewish Mysticism," *History of Religions* 40 (2000) 125–52.

⁸⁹ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 10. Suicide was not, of course, a purely metaphorical concern to rabbinic writers in Ghettos like Warsaw. Rabbi Efraim Oshry recounts that he was approached shortly before the liquidation of the Ghetto in Kovno in 1942 by a Jew who wanted to know whether it was permissible for him to commit suicide before deportation in order that he might be assured a Jewish burial, and also to avoid the worst of the torments that awaited the deportees. Rabbi Oshry responded by delineating the limited conditions under which he thought suicide would be permissible, even though he also felt that it would be irresponsible, under the circumstances, to publicize his decision. Rabbi Efraim Oshry, *She'elot u-Teshuvot mi-Ma'amakim* (2 vols.; 2d ed.; New York: 1959) 1:42–50. Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, 113 writes however that "suicides before the war were seven a week, now they're three or four."

We can now see that we do not feel [*margishim*⁹⁰] the pain of each affliction that comes upon us with the same intensity that we used to feel even minor troubles. Moreover, we know that if we were to feel today the full pain of each affliction that comes upon us with the same bitterness and emotion [*hargashah*] that once we felt, it would be impossible, God forbid, to continue to exist for even one day. The simple reason for this is that, as our sages have taught, “The dead flesh of a living person does not feel the scalpel.” *All that we feel is a crushing sensation throughout our bones; the world is turned dark for us, neither day nor night, just disorientation and confusion, as if the whole world were pressing down upon us and crushing and compressing us, God forbid, until we burst.* But we do not feel each individual torment.⁹¹

This is one of several essays in which Rabbi Shapira’s measured hermeneutic gives way to a tone of desperate personal exclamation. Although he continues to believe in and to preach the inevitability of ultimate redemption, he acknowledges darkly that there are some for whom the salvation will certainly come too late, not because they have already been killed but because tragedy has ensured that “no person [i.e., experiencing subject] even remains to rejoice or to have his faith strengthened.”⁹²

On November 22, 1941, after his recovery from what might have been typhoid, Rabbi Shapira grows even more explicit about the terrifying moral cost associated with his own survival:

Even the person that God saves and revives from his troubles or heals from his illness lacks the heart to rejoice in his salvation. For although he is a Jew—and should he not rejoice that a Jew has been saved from death?—Still, he dares not be glad. In his heart, he thinks, “If I rejoice in the fact that I have been revived, am I not in the category [of one who says] “I am, and there is none but me?”⁹³ As if I did not take to heart the whole catastrophe of Israel, and the masses of men, women and children who still had many years of life ahead but now fill graves of earth, as though they had descended alive to the abyss?”⁹⁴

“There are times,” Rabbi Shapira writes in one of his last Ghetto essays, in March of 1942, “when [a person] beats his heart, wondering, ‘Is it other than the hardness of my heart within me that allows me to strengthen myself and to continue [sacred] study in the midst of my afflictions and the many afflictions of Israel?’”⁹⁵ Polen glosses this painful question “survivor guilt,” but there are also

⁹⁰ From the word *regesh* used in the pre-war essays as a technical term for the lower reaches of emotional agitation.

⁹¹ Shapira, *’Esh Kodesh*, 117. Emphasis in the original.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 116, from an essay written around August 30, 1941.

⁹³ Isa 47:8.

⁹⁴ Shapira, *’Esh Kodesh*, 134.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 178.

cosmological and ritual referents that lend this fear a poignancy that transcends the diagnostic paradigm.⁹⁶

Radical suffering can be experienced as an “excess” that overwhelms subjectivity and shatters the subject as it did in Sarah’s case, making apt Rabbi Shapira’s occasional invocation of the Lurianic metaphor of “shattered” cosmic vessels, overwhelmed by an influx of divine light.⁹⁷ But suffering can also be experienced as a crushing weight that presses subjectivity into retreat, a literal absence of vital flow that preserves the body alive only as a kind of empty vessel, devoid of “all that really matters.”⁹⁸ These two models appear side by side in a brief pre-war note that Rabbi Shapira composed in response to a wave of suicides that he attributed to the economic collapse of the Jewish community in Poland between 1926 and 1928. “Do not weep only for the one who kills himself,” he wrote at the time, “but weep also for the walking dead” whose “very self and essence have grown cold.”⁹⁹ The fear of what one anthropologist calls the “loss of the human” takes many forms in Rabbi Shapira’s oeuvre, from shattering overflow to deadening loss of all empathy for oneself and others, rendering death—even by suicide—far from the most terrifying eventuality.¹⁰⁰

Despite these persistent indications of wrenching ambivalence, Rabbi Shapira struggled throughout the Ghetto years to preserve a degree of pathos and empathy commensurate with prophetic experience. In his sermon for 21 September 1940, he invokes the figure of a person who “rejoiced and caused others to rejoice with him” despite crushing sadness, and this becomes a kind of a model for his own wartime leadership. The “self-overcoming” [*hitgabrut*] he describes is certainly important in psychological terms as a means for overcoming despair, yet I am hesitant to join Henry Abramson in arguing that these Ghetto essays present a “therapeutic model” for extreme trauma, because of the way in which therapeutic language tends to medicalize Rabbi Shapira’s profound moral and cosmological concerns.¹⁰¹ He sought a multivalent ritual efficacy that cannot be subsumed under the individualistic rubric of psychological constructs.¹⁰² Medical language tends,

⁹⁶ Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 58–59.

⁹⁷ On the shattering of vessels as a depiction of radical suffering see Shapira, *’Esh Kodesh*, 124. Piekarz, *Ideological Trends*, 397 points out that earlier mystical writers also applied the “shattering of the vessels” idiom to different catastrophes, including the slaughter of Torah scholars during persecution by Rome.

⁹⁸ The expression is borrowed from Arthur Kleinman, “Everything that Really Matters: Social Suffering, Subjectivity and the Remaking of Human Experience in a Disorderly World,” *HTR* 90 (1997) 275–301.

⁹⁹ Shapira, *Tzav ve-Zeruz*, 16–17. See also *Hakhsharat ha-Avrekhim* 62b, where even before the war he compares “the enemies who make our lives exceedingly bitter from without” and “the coldness towards Torah and divine service from within.”

¹⁰⁰ Kleinman, “All that Really Matters.”

¹⁰¹ See Abramson, “The *’Esh Kodesh* of Rabbi Kalonimus Kalmish Shapiro.”

¹⁰² Don Seeman, “Ritual Practice and Its Discontents,” in *A Companion to Psychological Anthropology* (ed. Conerly Casey and Robert B. Edgerton; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) 358–73.

moreover, to remove the author from the scene of the suffering in which his writing is embedded, and to exaggerate his optimism that even divine intervention would suffice to heal the Ghetto's worst wounds.

Whenever Rabbi Shapira describes the importance of psychic "strengthening" or "self-overcoming" in his Ghetto writings, in fact, he also insists that these practices act theurgically to transform divine "judgment" [*din*] into mercy [*rahamim*]. "This strengthening itself acts to transform evil into good, and bring blessing upon Your [i.e. God's] people Israel."¹⁰³ In the language of Lurianic Kabbalah, this is another way of saying that self-overcoming [*hitgabrut*] helps to modulate and reduce the flow of vitality in suffering, and so avoid a "shattering of the vessels," which appears to be a literal rather than merely metaphoric concern. Even careful scholars like Nehemia Polen, Eliezer Schweid and Mendl Pierkarz, each of whom note the presence of these themes in *'Esh Kodesh*, tend to underestimate their overall significance—perhaps because of their preoccupation with the extraction of propositional meanings of a theological or discursive nature, and perhaps also because most historical and theological writers are ill accustomed to thinking about ritual in theoretical terms.¹⁰⁴ By contrast, I am arguing that these texts should be read as the literary pole of an embodied practice aimed at shifting the entire *habitus* of divine and human relationships. Making suffering "sufferable" through symbolic or theological articulation was at best only secondary to this goal, and was sometimes frankly discarded as impossible.

In a diary entry from February 1941, the Ghetto historian Emmanuel Ringelblum describes Hasidim dancing in the Warsaw Ghetto:

In the prayer house of the Pietists from Braclaw on Nowolipie Street there is a large sign: Jews, Never Despair! The Pietists dance there with the same religious fervor as they did before the war. After prayers one day, a Jew danced there whose daughter had died the day before.¹⁰⁵

For a secularist like Ringelblum, this scene evokes many attempts by Ghetto inhabitants to maintain an air of normalcy despite their situation, yet it is worth noting that the "pietists [Hasidim] from Braclaw" (Breslov) to whom he refers are

¹⁰³ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 62.

¹⁰⁴ Pierkarz, *Ideological Trends*, 392, 403–4 describes at least two examples of the "sweetening of judgments" theme in *'Esh Kodesh*, yet he repeatedly summarizes Rabbi Shapira's goal in these passages as "explaining the meaning and significance [of divine justice]" or understanding "the meaning of the tribulations," as if these depictions of ritual activism on Rabbi Shapira's part were really just idioms for an essentially cognitive concern. Schweid does a somewhat better job of emphasizing the ritual and theurgic components of Rabbi Shapira's Ghetto writings, noting for instance that he sought to "activate every one of Hasidism's educational-mystical-ritual tools of leadership within the context of the Nazi conquest" (*From Ruin to Salvation*, 106). Yet Schweid too retreats from this position by asserting repeatedly that Rabbi Shapira's fundamental motivation was the (failed) attempt to find "theological justifications for the Holocaust while it occurred" (*ibid.*, 138). Schweid shows relatively minor attention to Rabbi Shapira's specific claims about the efficacy of ritual, which he too seems to treat as a homiletic device designed to raise the spirits of the Hasidim.

¹⁰⁵ Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, 125, dated 19 February 1941.

known precisely for the redemptive significance they attribute to joyous dance as a ritual technique for integrating the human body and personality with the divine *anthropos*, thus drawing blessing down into the phenomenal world.¹⁰⁶ Rather than an attempt to distract themselves from their situation, therefore, might this not be understood as an attempt to ritually engage and overcome it?

In June 1940, by the same token, Rabbi Shapira's celebration of the Jewish *Shavuot* [Pentecost] festival was described by a witness, Rabbi Shimon Huberband:

There was a crowd of about 150 people, but the traditional dairy meal wasn't served as it was in earlier years. The Rebbe said words of Torah, including many words of strengthening and encouragement. Various *zmiros* [traditional melodies] were sung. When the gathering concluded, the traditional dance—with one person standing behind the other—began. During the dance, the Rebbe wept profusely.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Michael Fishbane, "To Jump for Joy: The Rites of Dance According to Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 6 (1997) 371–87. Schindler, *Hasidic Responses*, 84 cites a Lodz Ghetto testimony by Simha Bornstein, a Hasid who wrote to his brother that Rabbi Nahman had come to him in a dream and danced with him, and that he found upon awakening a passage in the Rabbi's book testifying that "he believes that dancing softens *Din*" [divine judgment].

¹⁰⁷ Cited in Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 13. It has not to my knowledge been noted in this context that ritually efficacious or mystical weeping has been associated specifically with the night of the *Shavuot* festival. Already in the sixteenth century, Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz writes that a group who gathered at Rabbi Joseph Caro's house in Turkey on *Shavuot* heard revelations from Caro's angelic *maggid* that included a special order of study and prayer for the night (*tiqqun Shavuot*), as well as strong encouragement to ease the exile of the Divine Presence by emigrating to the Holy Land (which both Alkabetz and Caro soon did). "All of us burst into weeping from joy," writes Alkabetz, "and also when we heard about the suffering of the *Shekhinah* [Divine Presence] because of our sins, her voice [i.e., that of the *Shekhinah*] like that of an ill woman pleading with us, and so we strengthened ourselves and did not pause in our study until morning." It is noteworthy that this experience led to certain ritual innovations related to the intensification of mourning practices for the destruction of Jerusalem and the *Shekhinah*'s exile. See R. Isaiah Horowitz, *Shnei Lihot ha-Brit, Masekhet Shavuot: Perek Ner Mitzvah* 6–13. It is clear that this practice bore strong affinities with the custom of midnight study and lamentation (*tiqqun hatzot*) which also were subjects of innovation by the Safed mystics at around this time. On the efficacy of Torah study joined to lamentation for the pursuit of mystical visions as well and hastening redemption, see Eitan Fishbane, "Tears of Disclosure: The Role of Weeping in Zoharic Narrative," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 11 (2002) 25–47; Moshe Idel, *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 308–320; Shaul Magid, "Conjugal Union, Mourning and Talmud Torah in R. Isaac Luria's Tikkun Hazot," *Daat* 36 (1996) xvii–xlv; Elliot Wolfson, "Weeping, Death and Spiritual Ascent in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Mysticism," in *Death, Ecstasy and Other Worldly Journeys* (ed. John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 209–47. With respect to *Shavuot* as an especially propitious time for these activities, see sources cited by Idel, *Kabbalah*, 75–88; also Rabbi Shlomo ha-Cohen Rabinowich of Radumsk's exceedingly popular *Tiferet Shelomo* (2 vols.; Warsaw: 1867–69; repr., Jerusalem: 1992) 2:321, and the comments of Rabbi Shapira's father, Rabbi Elimelekh of Grodzisk, in *Kuntres Tiferet ha-Banim*, 21–24, which has been published as a preface to *Derekh ha-Melekh*. Idel interprets an account of R. Israel of Ryzhin (1796–1850) weeping with his students after the evening meal one *Shavuot* rather than teaching them Torah as a statement about the decline of the generations in Hasidism (Idel, *Hasidism*, 239–44), but this episode too is rendered more coherent if we posit that both R. Israel and Rabbi Shapira were participating in a

Rabbi Shapira's dance may have been less exuberant than the dancing that Ringelblum describes, but neither his dancing nor his tears were any less spiritually ramified. In a 1928 letter to his son who was living in the land of Israel, and who had complained in a pre-*Shavuot* letter to his father of a certain spiritual dullness, Rabbi Shapira writes:

A person prepares himself before the festival for the festival, and on the festival itself he penetrates according to his level the clouds [*'arafel*] and draws down a little bit of the honey, and then when his joy breaks forth and he dances, his soul is revealed through this emotion [*hitragshut*]; but when a person is covered by dust all year long and he *also* dances on the festival, who can assure me that this is anything more than just a trembling of the nerves [*'atzabim*]?¹⁰⁸

In a lengthy passage from his pre-war journal dated 1933 furthermore, Rabbi Shapira reflects upon his emotions [*hitragshuyot*] during the holiday dancing of previous years, which was also often accompanied by weeping and by the expectation of a divine response: "Lord of the Universe who hears the voice of weeping," he writes, "what will you do with all the tears that Israel has shed during these days of grace [i.e., the festivals]? . . . And what will You do with Your own tears that fall, as it were, each day, on account of our catastrophe and our affliction?"¹⁰⁹ The redemptive efficacy of such tears is construed as neither wholly mechanical

ritualized practice long associated with this holiday. Wertheim, *Halakhot ve-Halikhot*, 156, notes that many Hasidic leaders were willing to forgo the teaching of Torah at their *tish* because the communal sharing of food and song were considered equally efficacious with Torah study. He also cites R. Shalom of Belz, whose work on the reasons for Hasidic customs (*Ta'amei ha-Minhagim*, 3:82) asserts the mystical equivalence of *tish* (the mystical sharing of food) and *tiqqun Shavuot*, the program of nighttime study on this holiday.

¹⁰⁸ From a letter dated "Fourth day of *Parashat Shelah*," of the Jewish year 5688 (1938). See *Iggerot Kodesh*, p. 4, printed in *Zikhron Kodesh le-va'al 'Esh Kodesh*. On dance and redemptive consciousness in the thought of Rabbi Shapira's ancestor, R. Kalonymos Epstein of Krakow, see Nehemia Polen, "Miriam's Dance: Radical Egalitarianism in Hasidic Thought," *Modern Judaism* 12 (1992) 1–21.

¹⁰⁹ Shapira, *Tzav ve-Zeruz*, 22. Here we see that human and divine weeping are both described as potentially redemptive in a pre-war text. R. Shapira's grandfather, R. Epstein of Krakow, notes in *Ma'or va-Shemesh* (on the *Haftarah* for *Mahar Hodesh*) that a person who weeps for the exile of the Divine Presence can perform "great unifications" by raising the lowest *sefirah* (*Malkhut*) into contact with the "highest" places from which blessing is channeled. R. Shapira's close contemporary, R. Samuel Borenstein of Sochachew also writes (in his 1917 essays on *Vayigash* and *Shelah* in *Shem mi-Shemuel*) that the strong redemptive power of tears shed in prayer derives from the fact that tears originate in the "brain" (i.e., corresponding to the highest rungs of sefirotic emanation), and that this renders them "pure waters that wash away all filth." Moshe Idel (*Kabbalah*, 75) refers to mystical weeping as a ritual practice "that can be traced back through all the major stages of Jewish mysticism over a period of more than two millennia," but focuses his own important discussion (*Kabbalah*, 74–88, 197–99) on the theosophical Kabbalah of Vital and his contemporaries. On the redemptive power of divine weeping, see Michael Fishbane, "The Holy One Sits and Roars: Mythopoesis and Midrashic Imagination," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 1 (1991) 1–21; Aryeh Wineman, "The Metamorphosis of Narrative Traditions: Two Stories from Sixteenth Century Safed," *AJS Review* 10 (1985) 165–80; Polen, "Divine Weeping," and "Sealing the Book with Tears."

nor purely metaphoric in nature, as the well-documented tradition of mystical weeping among pious Jews (and indeed, their Christian and Muslim counterparts) attests.¹¹⁰

Ritual practice is doubly efficacious in this setting, in that it promises a divine response as well as forming a ground for the cultivation of embodied virtues like the dispositions through which emotional experience—glossed by words like *hitragshut* and *hitpa'alut*—is managed. It is true that Hasidic texts like *'Esh Kodesh* frequently attempt to join the disciplinary and discursive poles of ritual through reflection and exegesis on the sources of religious practice, but this should not lead scholars to conclude that ritual is primarily a symbolic code awaiting “interpretation” in a theological or cultural vein, much less an attempt to solve the puzzle of “meaning” in some abstract way.¹¹¹ On their own terms, the Ghetto writings strive to strike an appropriate balance between the necessity and danger of emotional experience, which is always framed as both a psychic and a cosmic dilemma.¹¹² Nor is it surprising that Rabbi Shapira engages this problem through the study and teaching of Torah, which is already a privileged site of ritual efficacy in Jewish mysticism.¹¹³ The writer, the teacher, and the student do not merely *describe* the empathy of prophetic selfhood, as Rabbi Shapira explains already in his earliest pedagogical tract, but rather participate in such empathy to the degree that their training and

¹¹⁰ The extent to which mystical or theurgic practices like weeping are thought to have a nearly automatic or mechanical efficacy varies. Idel (*Kabbalah*, 198) shows that even a single writer like R. Hayyim Vital made contradictory statements on the subject in different contexts. Idel suggests, however, that Hasidism in general moved away from mechanistic conceptions toward a more profound reliance on emotional experience and anthropopathic correspondence. Rabbi Shapira pauses on several occasions to remind his readers that the efficacy of Jewish mystical study and practice depend entirely on the attainment of a transformed subjectivity which bespeaks authentic “revelations of the soul” that can later be attested through their long-term ethical and spiritual effects upon the individual (see *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 159–79). The problem of mechanistic performance vs. “spontaneity” (which relates in theoretical terms to a broader set of issues about the nature of agency in ritual practice) has been raised for ritual weeping in Christian and Muslim contexts respectively by Piroska Nagy, “Religious Weeping as Ritual in the Medieval West,” in (ed. Don Handelman and Galina Lindquist; New York: Bergahn, 2005) 119–37, and Saba Mahmood, “Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Disciplines of Salat,” *American Ethnologist* 28 (2001) 827–53.

¹¹¹ The idea that ritual symbols should be viewed as part of a shifting continuum between discursive and disciplinary poles builds on a distinction between discursive and “sensory,” or viscerally embodied symbols in Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967). See also Seeman, “Martyrdom, Emotion and the Work of Ritual.”

¹¹² My approach to *'Esh Kodesh* has been influenced by ethnographies like Unni Wikan, *Managing Turbulent Hearts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). Wikan challenges cultural anthropologists who study emotion to adopt a more experience-near perspective by asking what is at stake for people in the construction and management of their emotional lives. Her book deals, inter alia, with debates over the degree to which grief is a culturally dependent response to loss, and should be read with interest in this regard by students of religion. Also see Arthur Kleinman and Don Seeman, “The Politics of Moral Practice in Psychotherapy and Religious Healing,” *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 32 (1998) 237–50.

¹¹³ Idel, *Hasidism*, 171–88; Elliot R. Wolfson, “The Mystical Significance of Torah Study in German Pietism,” *JQR* 84 (1993) 43–78.

spiritual adroitness permit.¹¹⁴ The text itself becomes a fulcrum through which to seek a profound and efficacious meeting with the immanent divine.

Weeping in Secret Places

Meeting the divine within the text became more pronounced in Rabbi Shapira's corpus as the war progressed. While early sermons like the one about Sarah's death emphasized the source of suffering in divine agency, some of his later sermons shift their emphasis towards the perception of suffering as an unfathomable divine burden.¹¹⁵ In a sermon from 14 February 1942, just a few months before the last of the surviving Ghetto sermons, Rabbi Shapira delivers what is perhaps his most searing and emotionally intense sermon on this theme:

Sometimes when a Jew is afflicted with suffering, he thinks that only he is in pain, as if all of his personal torment and the torment of the community of Israel do not touch [i.e., have no effect] above, God forbid. But the verse tells us, "In all of their pain, He is pained."¹¹⁶ And in the Talmud it appears that "when a person is in pain, what does the *Shekhinah* [i.e., divine presence] say? 'My head is too heavy for Me; my arms are too heavy for Me.'¹¹⁷ In the sacred books it is written that much more than the person is pained, God is pained, as it were, by the afflictions that a Jew suffers.¹¹⁸

In a note appended to one of his earlier essays, Rabbi Shapira had argued that "the strange afflictions and terrible, bizarre forms of death that the bizarre and wicked murderers have innovated for us since autumn 5692 [1941]" were without precedent in Jewish history.¹¹⁹ This comment may well relate to the adoption on his own part about the relationship between Ghetto suffering and earlier precedents from Jewish history, may well relate to the adoption of an unambiguous policy of genocide throughout occupied Poland around this time.¹²⁰ Be that as it may, Rabbi Shapira's early preoccupation with the dynamics of human loss and resilience give way in several key essays from this period to the contemplation of God's own inner life.

Building on classical rabbinic and mystical precedents, Rabbi Shapira speaks to the experience of deep abandonment that must have haunted his listeners.

¹¹⁴ See for instance *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 149–79. Moshe Idel marshals earlier sources to this effect in his "White Letters: From R. Levi Isaac of Berdichev's Views to Postmodern Hermeneutics," *Modern Judaism* 26 (2006) 169–92.

¹¹⁵ Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 106–121.

¹¹⁶ Isa 63:9, based on a variant reading preserved alongside the Masoretic text. The Talmudic discussion in *b. Ta'an*. 16a asks why the congregation carries the ark containing the Torah scrolls out onto the street and covers it with dust on days that have been declared public fast days due to prolonged drought. "Rabbi Yehudah ben Pazi said, 'This is as if to say, I [God] am with him [Israel] in affliction.' Resh Lakish said, 'In all of their pain, He is pained.' Rabbi Zeira said, 'When I first saw the rabbis cover the ark with dust, my whole body used to tremble.'"

¹¹⁷ *b. Hag.* 15b.

¹¹⁸ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 159.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 113–14.

¹²⁰ See discussions in Browning, *The Path to Genocide*.

His anxiety that God's silence in the face of genocide might be taken by Ghetto inhabitants to signify an absence of divine empathy resonates deeply with his own struggles over the collapse of empathy he feared within himself, and must be read in light of this dual concern:

It is possible that since blessed God is boundless and cannot be conceptualized within this world, so too His pain from the affliction of Israel is boundless. It isn't just that a person could never *bear* such great suffering as God bears, but that a person could never conceive properly of God's pain—never know His suffering or hear His voice: "Woe is to Me that I have destroyed My house and exiled My children!"¹²¹

Only the finitude of human psychic "vessels" prevents sufferers from perceiving that God's unutterable pain is in reality linked to their own. The Talmudic passage to which the sermon alludes tells the story of a certain Rabbi Yose, who once sought shelter amidst the ruins of Jerusalem in order to pray. He heard a voice "cooing like a dove" and saying, "Woe is to Me, that I have destroyed My house and exiled My children!"¹²² Later, Elijah the prophet tells Rabbi Yose in a vision that the voice he had heard was God's voice, and that it can be heard lamenting in this way every day, whenever pious Israelites gather in their synagogues to pray. Why then, asks Rabbi Shapira in his sermon, had Rabbi Yose never heard the voice of God before? His startling answer is that it was only when Rabbi Yose prayed in the ruins of destroyed Jerusalem that his own subjectivity could be "sufficiently annihilated, his own principle of constriction and boundary sufficiently destroyed" to allow the voice of God to break through. God may "roar like a lion," as Scripture indicates, but Rabbi Yose could hear nothing but an echo of that voice "cooing like a dove" when he stopped to pray amidst the destruction. Just as a ruin may be the only house of prayer that truly opens itself to the heavens, so *homo sympathetikos* may encounter God's grief only in the expansive ruins of his own shattered persona.

This teaching transposes Rabbi Shapira's own ambivalence about emotional self-mastery onto God's ambivalence about restraining a grief whose expression the cosmos would not bear. "This also explains how the world continues to exist in its place," Rabbi Shapira continues, "and is not destroyed by the grief and the voice of the Holy One blessed be He on account of the people of God who are suffering and His house [i.e., the Temple at Jerusalem] which has been razed. It is only because His great grief cannot enter the world."¹²³ Yet this response, which

¹²¹ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 159.

¹²² *b. Ber.* 3a.

¹²³ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 160. My reading of this text as a transposition of Rabbi Shapira's own emotional ambivalence is supported by the fact that he cites many of the same proof-texts about divine weeping in his pre-war writings to describe human, rather than divine emotion. See for instance the essays on Sarah's death from 1931 and 1933 in *Derekh ha-Melekh*, 13–21. Rabbi Shapira is far from the first to use these texts about divine pathos in a discussion of human grief and emotional experience. To take just one example, Rabbi Samuel Borenstein of Sochachew invoked these themes in 1917 for a critical comparison of those Hasidic teachers who rely on heavy emotionalism and

is based on a profoundly spatial metaphor of God's "great grief," is by itself indecisive because it begs the question of God's *willingness* to communicate divine grief in a frame that human beings could understand if God wanted them to. On the contrary, divine agency and silence were acute problems for Ghetto inhabitants, requiring sophisticated treatment.¹²⁴ Rabbi Shapira invokes a rabbinic motif in which the angels argue with God over the creation and sustenance of sinful humanity. This is a formulation that evokes deep and perhaps unprecedented pathos in Rabbi Shapira's teaching because of his characteristic insistence that the angels of the Midrash really represent nothing but competing impulses—which is to say ambivalence—within the divine persona.¹²⁵

An angel is pictured by a Midrash on the book of Lamentations arguing with God over the propriety of God's weeping in public.¹²⁶ It is disgraceful, states the angel, for a king to admit being aggrieved by his subjects, and so he offers to weep in God's stead, so that God will have not have any more reason to weep. What this really means for Rabbi Shapira is that since the angel represents that aspect of divine intentionality that demands an immediate redress of human wrongdoing, the angel's weeping would wipe God's cosmos violently and decisively clean through a variation on the redemptive (but also destructive) power of tears:

*If the voice of God's weeping were once to be heard in the world, the world would hear it and explode. Even a spark of God's grief in the world would scorch all of his adversaries. At the Red Sea, the Holy One blessed be He exclaimed [to the ministering angels], "My handiwork [the Egyptians] are drowning in the sea, and yet you sing praises before me?" And now that it is the Israelites who are drowning in blood, can the world continue to exist?*¹²⁷

those (like Rabbi Borenstein and his grandfather, R. Menahem Mendl of Kock), who take a more intellectually and emotionally restrained approach. See his *Shem mi-Shemuel. Vayigash* 1917, as well as Seeman, "Martyrdom, Emotion and the Work of Ritual."

¹²⁴ In cultural terms, silence was often framed as the rupture or withdrawal from relationship among Jews and Jewish writers in Eastern Europe, and this was also sometimes transposed to the relationship between God and the Jewish people. Yet certain forms of divine silence could even be framed as redemptive in nature, through the suppression of catastrophic emotion, as in *'Esh Kodesh*, or through the gathering of forces before decisive action to change the course of human history—as in the comment by an earlier Hasidic writer that God is like a powerful man, who absorbs insult after insult in silence before sweeping away His adversaries with an unstoppable rage (R. Gershon Hanokh Henikh [1839–1891], citing his grandfather, R. Mordecai Yosef Leiner of Izbica, in *Sod Yesharim: Purim va-Pesah* [Warsaw: 1901; repr., Brooklyn: 1992] 30, 80). For more on the themes of silence and redemption, and the gendered expectations relating to silence and speech, see Don Seeman, "The Silence of Rayna Batya: Torah, Suffering and Rabbi Barukh Epstein's 'Wisdom of Women,'" *Torah U-Madda Journal* 6 (1995–1996) 91–128.

¹²⁵ In *'Esh Kodesh*, 160, Rabbi Shapira refers explicitly to the angels as "agents of blessed God through whom His actions are carried out," where the intent is to suggest that they do not have will or agency of their own.

¹²⁶ From the twenty-fourth poem to *Lamentations Rabbah*.

¹²⁷ Ibid. [Emphasis in the original.]

For a moment, Rabbi Shapira allows the torrent of his own grief to burst the carefully woven exegetical strata of his discourse, as he openly identifies with the angels' demand for immediate divine intervention at the price of cosmic catastrophe. The desire for a cathartic expression of divine grief that would purge the world of human evil ("can the world continue to exist?") seems almost overwhelming for Rabbi Shapira, yet Rabbi Shapira's God still chooses a path of infinite silence and self-restraint rather than assent to the angel's request. Refusing to weep in public allows the cosmos to be preserved, but must inevitably be perceived as lack of care and empathy by those who suffer.

Angels consistently represent the demand for absolute justice and truth in Rabbi Shapira's reading of rabbinic literature, yet God stands for the sustainability of human presence. "Since God sought to atone for Israel's sins, and the time for salvation had not yet come. . . . He answered [the angel] saying, 'I will enter a place where you do not have permission to enter, and there [alone] I will weep.'¹²⁸ Underlying all of this is a reference to yet another Talmudic text in which the secret place of God's weeping (from the verse, "My soul shall weep in secret places") is identified with *batei gavei* or "inner chambers."¹²⁹ These in turn are identified by commentators with the highest of the *sefirot* in which differentiated being can be said to begin taking shape, namely *binah*.¹³⁰ Earlier commentators tended to read this Talmudic discussion in an essentially abstract and technical way that neutralized any hint of divine pathos, but Rabbi Shapira characteristically strives

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Jer 13:17, cited in *b. Hag. 5b*. "But if you will not hear it, My soul shall weep in secret places for the pride. Rabbi Samuel bar Inia said in the name of Rav, The Holy One blessed be He has a place and its name is 'Secret.' . . . But is there any weeping before the Holy One blessed be He? For behold, Rav Papa said, There is no grief before the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written, *Honor and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in His sanctuary* [Ps 96:6]! There is no contradiction: in one case we refer to the inner chambers [*batei gavei*], in the other, to the outer chambers [*batei barei*]."

¹³⁰ In the sixteenth century, both R. Samuel Edels (*Hiddushei Aggadot Maharsha*, ad loc.) and Rabbi Moses Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmon* 8:12 identified the hidden *batei gavai* where God weeps with the *sefirah* of *binah*. Also see Rabbi Bahya ben Asher's fourteenth-century Torah commentary on Gen 6:6 and R. Menahem Azaria of Fano (*Pelah ha-Rimmon*, ch. 8). Nehemia Polen (*The Holy Fire*, 141–42) notes that some kabbalists preferred to identify the divine pathos with a lower order of the sefirotic structure, presumably to avoid imputing tumultuous emotion to divinity, but it seems unwarranted to refer to this preference as a "consensus," since several Hasidic writers did in fact follow the opinion of Cordovero and Edels. Rabbi Shapira explicitly cites R. Edels as the source of his own teaching, although it appears that he was influenced by the formulation of *Pardes Rimmon* as well. Medieval opposition to the identification of "inner chambers" with divine weeping includes R. Todros ben Joseph ha-Levy Abulafia (*Otzar ha-Kavod*), R. Meir Ibn Gabbai (*Avodat ha-Kodesh*), R. Shimon Lavi (*Ketem Paz*) and R. David Ibn Zimra (*Magen David*), all of whom are cited in R. Reuven Margoliot's *Nitzotzei Zohar* to Zohar III:15b. Also see R. Menahem Recanati's commentary on Gen 6:6 with the supercommentary of Rabbi Mordecai Jaffee, *Levush Even Yekarah* in *Levushei 'Or Yakrut* (Jerusalem: Zikhron Aharon, 2000), 62–63. It is worth noting that this dispute may depend in part on a variant reading of the Talmud cited by R. Hananel ben Hushiel, ad loc., which seems to mediate against R. Cordovero's reading. Zohar I:65 can be read to support either position.

in this sermon to convey an *experience* of the unplumbed divine anguish that has been hidden away for the world's sake.¹³¹ "Now God's pain," he writes, "which is too much for the world to contain, becomes even greater and more sublime, so that not even the angel can perceive it."¹³²

Sarah may have died by taking suffering "too much to heart," in other words, but God reconciles infinite pain with the life of the cosmos by occulting grief in the most secret of cosmic or psychic recesses, where it cannot cause harm. This message may well have been intended to console sufferers in Warsaw by convincing them that the appearance of divine disinterest was actually keyed to the overwhelming force of God's grief pulsing imperceptibly through creation—a momentary glimpse into the divine pathos raging secretly on their behalf.¹³³ Rather than muting anguish, in other words, hidden weeping intensifies and authenticates pain while simultaneously shielding the world from its catastrophic effects. What is more, Rabbi Shapira argues in the lengthy and highly technical continuation of this sermon, that the *battei gavai*, or inner chambers where secret divine weeping is hidden, are ritually accessible within the text of the Torah, which "contracts" and modulates the infinite power of divine energy (which is to say, pain), much like a reactor core, into a form that finite humanity can perceive without shattering. It is certain that Rabbi Shapira refers not just to the text of Scripture when he says "Torah" in this context, but to the whole interwoven corpus of Jewish sacred textuality, including his own Hasidic sermons, whose production and study are without a doubt meant to be ritually efficacious in their own right.¹³⁴

¹³¹ R. Moses Cordovero (*Pardes Rimmonim* 8:12) for example, undertakes to elaborate the complex sefirotic architecture that underlies the Talmudic text according to the kabbalists, yet neglects the experience of grief implied by that text even when he describes the mystical significance of divine weeping. More striking still is the approach of his rough contemporary, Rabbi Judah Loeb (Maharal) of Prague, who also associates the "inner chambers" of *battei gavei* with the place of divine weeping, but writes that "weeping" is really just a metaphor of "lack" or "privation" (*hisaron*) in the philosophical sense, which can be attributed to the failings of human subjects who are unable to receive God's blessing in its fullness (*Ba'er ha-Golah*, *Ba'er* 4). Rabbi Shapira's contrary inclination is due not just to the distinction between the systematizer and the writer of Hasidic sermons, but also to the crucial role he attributes emotional and imaginative capacities in spiritual education, and his deep comfort with anthropopathic imagery.

¹³² Shapira, 'Esh Kodesh, 160.

¹³³ For a related argument about the intimacy revealed by divine weeping in a wartime sermon, see Greenberg, "A Musar Response to the Holocaust," 105–107.

¹³⁴ On the status of the Hasidic sermon as "Torah," see Idel, *Hasidism*, 240–42. The association between Torah and *battei gavei* (the "secret place" of divine weeping) was already clear from earlier sources like Zohar III:109a; R. Moses Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim* 8:12; and Rabbi Isaac Luria, *Sha'ar Ruah ha-Kodesh* (the latter cited in Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, 315), and was well-established in Hasidic circles. See for instance Rabbi Shapira's ancestor, Rabbi Elimelekh of Lyzansk (*No'am Elimelekh* 65b, *Parashat Behar*), who notes that simple people who have not studied Torah do not have access to this dimension of divine intimacy. Rabbi Samuel Borenstein of Sochachew likewise insists in a 1916 sermon (*Shem mi-Shemuel*, *Parashat Tetzaveh*) that there is a deep, affinity between penitential weeping and the cognitive study of Torah (especially Jewish law) because both derive from *mohin* (the brain), which is in this context a designation for *battei gavei* or the *sefirah* of *binah*

The stakes of this conception are actually quite high, because divine grief over the fate of Jews in Warsaw shades into the primordial pain of divine contraction, or *tzimtzum*, through which existence itself is allowed a space in which to unfold, a “suffering for the other” on divinity’s part that the Torah reveals only to its most intimate students.¹³⁵ It is axiomatic in Hasidism that both the Torah and the cosmos are created from the same divine speech, and this means that the divine weeping that is perceptible to scholarly adepts must also cause those adepts to reaffirm their consciousness of an ontic unity that encompasses both Torah and Ghetto in its purview. “When a man ascends and unifies with the voice of God that is in the Torah,” writes Rabbi Shapira, “he hears Torah from all the sounds of the world; from the twittering of birds and the lowing of cattle and from the tumult of human beings . . . and thus all evil is lifted up [i.e., transformed] into good.”¹³⁶ While this kind of unity certainly undermines the vision of absolute and irredeemable evil in the holocaust world, it does not in any way compromise the adept’s capacity for strategies of spiritual or ritual activism, like *hamtaqat ha-dinim*, or “sweetening of judgments,” which is how kabbalists describe the “repair” of evil and suffering whose vitality must be “lifted” back to its divine source (in *binah*) before it can be “healed” through subsequent emanation.¹³⁷ This is a ritual-theurgic construct that has ample precedent in earlier mystical and Hasidic teaching, yet no one before Rabbi Shapira identified the standard metaphors of “light,” “abundance,” and divine “vitality” so forcefully and insistently with the almost unthinkable mystery of transcendent divine pain.¹³⁸ Ultimately, pain is just another expression of the divine effulgence.

(see above, n. 109). Indeed, this may be implicit to Rabbi Shapira’s decision to explore this theme in connection with the Torah portion known as *mishpatim*. On Torah study and mystical experience, see Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) 164–220.

¹³⁵ Both R. Moses Cordovero (*Pardes Rimonim* 8:12) and Maharal (*Ba’er ha-Golah*, *Ba’er* 4) argue on exegetical grounds that the divine weeping envisioned by *b. Hag. 5b* is “constant weeping” (*bekhiyyah temidit*), which R. Cordovero relates to the process of divine emanation and contraction.

¹³⁶ Shapira, *’Esh Kodesh*, 163. On the study of Torah as an avenue to mystical consciousness and unity with the divine in Polish Hasidism, see Brill, *Thinking God*, 235–66.

¹³⁷ This “merged *vita contemplativa et activa*,” writes Brody (“Open to Me the Gates of Righteousness,” 25–27), constitutes “a path that is both contemplative and active, in which the Hasid learns to perceive and experience the non-dual unity of phenomena within the divine and acts to sustain their existence . . . a reflection of the fact that kabbalah is a spirituality of cosmic blessing, using both mystical consciousness and ritual praxis as vehicles for the manifestation of divine presence and energy within the world.”

¹³⁸ Many Hasidic writers before Rabbi Shapira identified the text of the Torah as the secret place in which adepts could attain privileged access to, and experience of, God’s unmediated presence. See Idel, “White Letters.” But this is usually described as contact with a divine “voice” or “light,” rather than the infinite sorrow of Rabbi Shapira’s sermon. *Human* pain is much more frequently and less guardedly depicted as intrinsic to the articulation of divine vitality in this world. Already in the first generation of Hasidism, for example, Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye writes: “I heard from my teacher [the Baal Shem Tov] . . . that since the creation of the world was effected through *din*

This late Ghetto sermon presumes a high degree of spiritual virtuosity among its readers, but even readers who are unable to attain the deep perception of oneness that Rabbi Shapira describes are called upon to emulate God in self-mastery or *hitgabrut*, “provoking God, as it were, to master Himself as well, and send an influx of kindness to this world for all of our bodily needs.”¹³⁹ Issued only a week after he composed the “hidden weeping” sermon, this call for self-mastery returns to earlier and more modest demands upon listeners, since it is clear that *hitgabrut* (which is related to concepts like *tzimtzum* and “strengthening of the vessels”) depends more upon force of will than on contemplative attainment. The vital point for our purposes here is simply that both “self-mastery” and “weeping in secret places” pertain to the psychic and cosmological dimensions of mystical teaching simultaneously. The Torah holds up not so much a “therapeutic model” for Rabbi Shapira as a ritual-salvific one, in which human and divine subjectivities model and participate in one another continually, on a variety of levels. The careful phenomenological description and management of human subjective states that defined Rabbi Shapira’s pre-war and wartime literary output, and the ritual-theurgic gestures of *hitgabrut* or *hamtaqat ha-dinim* that effect cosmic blessing in the Ghetto, turn out upon closer examination to be one and the same.

One important benefit of this ritual-theurgical model was, in fact, that it provided Rabbi Shapira with a set of ritual idioms like “shattering of vessels” and “blockage of vital flow” that also could serve as frameworks for talking about (and managing) dimensions of human experience that resist discursive elaboration, like the collapse of subjectivity in radical pain.¹⁴⁰ One of the reasons that scholars of religion have had so much trouble acknowledging and analyzing these experiential states is that

[divine judgment], which is contraction, and since in each and every world there was a contraction of His infinite light to a level that it could be received . . . [therefore] judgments and afflictions that a person suffers constitute a body to the soul and to the spiritual vitality that shines upon a person, which is His blessed divinity, the light of the *En Sof* that enlivens all, and that [therefore] when a person welcomes affliction with joy and love he performs a unification, joining the vessel and body . . . to the soul, which is joy and spiritual vitality.” (*Toledot Ya’akov Yosef, va-Ethanan*: 16). Pain is here described as a “garment” or “body” rather than as divine vitality per se, but it is well-known in Hasidism that the garment itself is also constituted by the influx of divine vitality in a “coarser” and less accessible form. Human suffering can be described as a “body” to the light of divinity because suffering represents the necessary “contraction” through which human existence is made possible, and this means that human grief or weeping can also be construed with proper intent as efficacious channels for this power. See Shimon Menahem Mendl Gowardchov, *Sefer Ba’al Shem Tov al ha-Torah* (2 vols; Jerusalem, [1937] 1993) 1:184–86, where a number of sources related to this theme have been collected. Finally, see R. Dov Baer Schneersohn of Lubavitch’s nineteenth-century essay on the conscription of Jewish troops to the Czarist army (*Inyan Lekihat Anshei Hayil*, printed in *Ma’amrei Admur ha-Emtsa’i*, 261–277), where he cites many of the same proof texts as Rabbi Shapira in order to argue that “weeping in secret places” by human beings can help to draw vitality and blessing into the world.

¹³⁹ Shapira, *Esh Kodesh*, 169.

¹⁴⁰ See Mary-Jo Delvecchio Good, Paul E. Brodwin, Byron J. Good, and Arthur Kleinman, *Pain as Human Experience: An Anthropological Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

they directly challenge the encompassing norms of discursive “meaningfulness” around which so many of our own intellectual practices revolve. The crucible of *'Esh Kodesh* may help to point us towards a different set of strategies for writing about that which resists language in lived experience, and especially the experience of suffering. Elsewhere, I have argued that this realization should force us to rethink our assumptions about the relationship between suffering and ritual, which have been imbued since Weber with a bias towards secularized theodicy (the quest for meaning and coherence in the face of pain) at the expense of the multifaceted efficacy and ethical concern with which ritual is often associated in religious contexts.¹⁴¹ In Rabbi Shapira’s case, I have argued that the impossible weight of suffering in Warsaw pushed ritual practice inexorably away from its meaning-making dimension and towards an increased emphasis on the essentially ethical gestures of bringing down blessing, defending the cosmos, and suffering for the other.

It was precisely in reflection upon the experience of the Holocaust that the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas formulated his own rejection of theodicy and other meaning-oriented responses to suffering in modern times. “Suffering,” he writes in phenomenological mode, “is surely a *given* in consciousness, a certain ‘psychological content,’ like the experience of color, of sound, of contact, or of any other experience. But in this ‘content’ itself, it is in-spite-of-consciousness, unassumable.”¹⁴² Levinas refers to suffering as “useless” both because epochal modern atrocities like the Holocaust have outstripped the reach of secular and religious systems that purport to give them meaning and also because extreme suffering has *always*, in his view, resisted the imposition of meaning to some degree. “Taken as an ‘experienced’ content, the denial and refusal of meaning which is imposed as a sensible quality is the *way* in which the unbearable is precisely not borne by consciousness, the way this not-being-borne is, paradoxically, itself a sensation or given.”¹⁴³ The “not-being-borne” of suffering jibes poorly with the triumphal and meaning-oriented themes of our secular and religious cultures, yet

¹⁴¹ Seeman, “Otherwise than Meaning.”

¹⁴² Levinas, “Useless Suffering,” 156. While I can only touch briefly on these themes here, I have argued at length elsewhere (Seeman, “Otherwise than Meaning,”) that the social science tradition of Weber and Geertz typically links ritual to theodicy by viewing ritual largely as a meaning-making or meaning-preserving response to the upheavals of suffering, and that this view may be challenged through a careful reading of writers like Levinas and Rabbi Shapira, each of whom associated ritual with the transcendence of self in responding to the pain of the other. For Levinas, theodicy is a false attempt to imbue suffering with meaning, and is related to Western philosophy’s tragic privileging of ontology over ethics, or of the “problem of Being” over the problems of individual beings, which makes the fear of death more significant than the fear of committing murder. Levinas has in mind, of course, his one-time teacher Martin Heidegger, who became a proponent of National Socialism in Germany, but leverages this into a much broader critique of certain trends in Western thought. It is interesting in this context to note that while Levinas explicitly eschewed Jewish mystical cosmology, he sought to preserve the “inimitable resources” of this language. See Elliot Wolfson, “Secrecy, Modesty, and the Feminine: Kabbalistic Traces in the Thought of Levinas,” *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 14 (2006) 193–224.

¹⁴³ Levinas, “Useless Suffering,” 156.

I know of no better way to describe Rabbi Shapira's vulnerable matriarch Sarah, or his immeasurably hidden divine weeping. Like Rabbi Shapira, Levinas argues intuitively that ritual practice may sometimes bear more similarity to the "medical gesture" of intervention to end suffering than to the realm of theodicy and meaning-making that always strives to make suffering "sufferable."¹⁴⁴ For Levinas, this means that what he calls ethics, must come to take the place of theodicy in human life. Yet Rabbi Shapira surpasses the philosopher in his ability to give expression to this intuition in a way that is more readily compatible with the taken-for-granted religiosity of so many of those who suffered, and with the ritual frames of Jewish piety.

■ On Uselessness and Efficacy

Several factors have contributed to the neglect of ritual efficacy and "useless suffering" among readers of *'Esh Kodesh*. In academic research, claims to ritual efficacy are often transmuted into claims about the "meaningfulness" of practice that reinforce deeply rooted religious and intellectual biases against the recognition of ritual power.¹⁴⁵ Along similar lines, anthropologists and others often try to sidestep the problem of belief that inevitably arises when claims to efficacy are examined by skeptical outsiders—e.g., "do they *really* believe in the power of witchcraft?"—because it is felt that asking this question will conjure nearly insurmountable ethical and epistemological dilemmas relating to the portrayal of other people's rationality.¹⁴⁶ Yet I would argue that ignoring such problems never really solves them, and that we owe Rabbi Shapira at least the honor of being faithful to his words and the spirit in which they were written. Academic Hasidic studies are still, with some exceptions, dominated by an intellectualist frame that resists the focus on ritual efficacy I have been advocating. And in Rabbi Shapira's case, there is also the added factor that claims to ritual efficacy in the Holocaust ring so crushingly hollow—and for some readers so plainly offensive—in its aftermath. In order to speak convincingly about efficacy in this context, we need to be prepared to speak with equal clarity about the potential for failure.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Seeman, *Otherwise than Meaning*."

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Also see Seeman, "Ritual and its Discontents," and Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*.

¹⁴⁶ Some of the most provocative treatments of this problem are Byron Good, *Medicine, Rationality and Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Medicine, Science and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); T. M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

¹⁴⁷ By insisting on the possibility of ritual failure, my intent is certainly not the positivistic assumption that efficacy can be judged *only* from a standpoint of technical, utilitarian rationality. On the contrary, I am arguing that we need to attend to the ways in which efficacy and claims about efficacy emerge in the texts that we study. How do Hasidic texts themselves portray what is at stake in the efficacy that they seek? See Kleinman and Seeman, "The Politics of Moral Practice"; also Douglas Hollan, "Suffering and the Work of Culture: A Case of Magical Poisoning in Toraja," *American Ethnologist* 21 (1994) 74–87. The problem of efficacy *from the outsider's perspective*

Yet ritual failure is infrequently assayed. "To have had that vision [of evil's transmutation into good]," writes Nehemia Polen, "to have had the courage to publicly expound it, at *that* time and in *that* place, was itself the ultimate triumph over, and transformation of, evil. By his example and by his teaching, Rabbi Shapira did indeed prevail."¹⁴⁸ Moshe Idel, too, felt it necessary to conclude his innovative work on ritual power in Hasidism by suggesting that the resilience of Hasidic life after genocide testifies to the way in which "the 'magic' of language is sometimes able to prevail over the efficiency of technology."¹⁴⁹ It is not difficult to sympathize with such claims, yet we may also feel compelled to ask what analytic work these assertions perform, and whether "magic," to use Idel's term, really did prevail. Rabbi Shapira and all of his surviving compatriots were deported to a concentration camp following the Warsaw Ghetto uprising that began on Passover in 1943. They were later shot.¹⁵⁰ *'Esh Kodesh* remains probably the last work of traditional Jewish and Hasidic scholarship ever composed on Polish soil, home before the war to over three million Jews and to one of the most vibrant centers of Jewish cultural and religious life. Perhaps more to the point is that Rabbi Shapira's own writing testifies on almost every page to the awful contingency of any and all such claims to overcoming. He calls our attention with endless and numbing regularity to the terrifying costs and ambivalence imposed even by survival in the Ghetto context, and to the fragility of those achieved and emergent faculties—such as confidence in one's own subjectivity and compassion for others—that create conditions for being human. Would Rabbi Shapira himself have written so casually, had he survived, about the "victory of language?"¹⁵¹

is a different problem entirely—see Brian K. Smith, "Ritual Perfection and Ritual Sabotage in the Veda," *History of Religions* 35 (1996) 285–306.

¹⁴⁸ Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 135. Polen acknowledges (*ibid.*, x) that his research on *'Esh Kodesh* was slowed by the difficulty of gazing at "the awesome pain of that period for extended lengths of time. The work often proceeded by off-axis vision, as a naked-eye astronomer might view a heavenly body, except that in this case the phenomenon radiated darkness rather than light."

¹⁴⁹ Idel, *Hasidism*, 223. "Today it is sufficient to observe," Idel writes, "even superficially, the descendants of the various nineteenth-century trends of Hasidism to see that the terrible encounter between their ancestors, in their strongholds in Poland and Russia, and the bearers of scientific-mythological Nazism, was unable to extirpate their vital religiosity."

¹⁵⁰ The best account, while necessarily somewhat speculative, remains Polen, *The Holy Fire*, 152–56.

¹⁵¹ Jews have not of course been the only people in modern times to oppose "the efficiency of [a murderous] technology" with recourse to the "magic of language," nor have they been the only people who arguably failed to attain their salvation in this way. For just one ethnographic example of what may be considered a paradigmatic modern catastrophe, see Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), where the anthropologists describe some of the "magical" and conceptual defenses of the Tswana against political, techno-military and conceptual conquest by Europeans. It is worthwhile in this context to ponder Jonathan Boyarin's provocative suggestion that European Jews be compared with other colonized people as the "internally colonized" people of Europe. Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

Rabbi Shapira's books and their translations continue to grow in popularity in both Israel and North America. "To the best of my knowledge," writes Kimmy Kaplan, "almost all Haredi and national-religious groups in Israel share a preoccupation with the writings of Rabbi Kalonimys-Kelmish Shapira . . . the Rabbi of Piaseczno." Yet he also notes that they focus mostly on his wartime *'Esh Kodesh*, and that each group "presents its readers with his writings, and interprets them in various, at times conflicting ways."¹⁵² A few years ago I stumbled upon a daylong public forum devoted entirely to Rabbi Shapira's teachings, held in Yiddish on a minor fast day commemorating ancient travails in one of Jerusalem's burgeoning ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods. Rabbi Shapira may well have felt at home in that scene of reconstructed Old-World piety, despite the chasm of time and circumstance that necessarily separates him from *yeshiva* students in contemporary Jerusalem or Bnei Brak. Yet looks can also be deceiving. The popular media of contemporary ultra-Orthodoxy tends to invoke the Holocaust primarily for its timeless and generalized icons of unshakeable faith and miraculous salvation, or as a way of calling attention to the human failings (Jewish sinfulness and Gentile anti-Semitism) that contributed to the catastrophe.¹⁵³

How does such a message sit with Rabbi Shapira's depiction of "faith" as a kind of vulnerable prophetic influx—a particular register of subjectivity on the divine-human continuum—or with his openly expressed doubt as to whether such an experience was still at all possible for himself and others in Warsaw? "Prophecy is impossible in a state of sadness," he writes in his penultimate Ghetto essay of July 1942, and "even homiletic exegesis of the affliction [like that which constitutes *'Esh Kodesh*] is impossible when a person is broken and fallen down. How then can a person strengthen himself at least a little until salvation comes?"¹⁵⁴ How, in essence, can a defiant post-Holocaust Orthodoxy absorb the twin fears voiced by Rabbi Shapira's *'Esh Kodesh*, that all of his strategies for ritual efficacy might simply fail or that even their success might leave him guilty of a betrayal toward those for whom he cared the most?

Ritual failure is both too difficult and too easy to contemplate. Too difficult because the reader wants Rabbi Shapira to emerge in some way victorious, if only to believe that such victories are still possible. Yet too easy, because the language of technical, utilitarian efficacy that disavows "linguistic magic" in favor of a putative

¹⁵² This is an observation that calls out for further ethnographic investigation. Kimmy Kaplan, "The Holocaust in Contemporary Israeli Haredi Popular Religion," *Modern Judaism* 22 (2002) 168.

¹⁵³ See Ruth Ebenstein, "Remembered Through Rejection: *Yom Ha-Shoah* in the Askenazi-Haredi Daily Press, 1950–2000," *Journal of Israel Studies* 8 (2003) 141–67; Kimmy Caplan, "The Holocaust in Contemporary Israeli Haredi Popular Religion"; Dina Porat, "Amalek's Accomplices—Blaming Zionism for the Holocaust: Anti-Zionist Ultra-Orthodoxy in Israel during the 1980s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992) 695–729. Piekarz, *Ideological Trends*, and Schweid, *From Ruin to Salvation*, 126 have also noted the apparent difficulty of reconciling *'Esh Kodesh* with many contemporary myths about religious life and "spiritual resistance" during the holocaust.

¹⁵⁴ Shapira, *'Esh Kodesh*, 191.

realism seems both descriptively and morally unequal to the burden imposed upon readers of a text like *'Esh Kodesh*. The strategy I have advocated instead is one that recognizes efficacy as always “complex, differentially constructed, even contested in experience” and irreducible to any single cultural or theological template.¹⁵⁵ As readers, we need to focus on the contingency of the author’s own struggle as revealed by the text, and resist the impulse to claim some elusive or simplifying resolution. *'Esh Kodesh* is indeed an integrated work as Polen claims, but its successive sermons map the shifting, sometimes interrelated, and occasionally incommensurate forms of efficacy that Rabbi Shapira struggled to achieve over time in a ritual–experiential continuum, from the literal and physical salvation of Jews in Poland to the defense of prophetic empathy; from the “sweetening” of cosmic judgments to the most intimate modulations of emotional and moral life, and readers should engage the indeterminacy suggested by the text at each of these levels. There is power in *'Esh Kodesh* to unsettle many of our habitual practices of reading and thinking, but this is only true when it is approached as it was written, with a view to ritual and hermeneutic strategies rather than foregone ideological conclusions, and to lived experience in suffering rather than doctrine.

Like the classical Hasidic texts that Rabbi Shapira described and commented upon throughout his career, *'Esh Kodesh* was intended to do more than just educate or console its readers, or to develop an articulate religious ideology that could in theory be abstracted from its literary frame. It was an intervention in subjectivity, a privileged site for the “revelation of the soul” and of the divine immanence that “fills and surrounds all worlds.”¹⁵⁶ Yet because of the devastating circumstances in which it was written and the vulnerable yet resilient humanity of its author, *'Esh Kodesh* also served at least one other purpose in the Warsaw Ghetto that may be difficult for us at this cultural and historical remove to grasp. In making a space for thinking and living with pain in such extremity, this text also served as the one place remaining in which its author could still respond to an echo of the infinite divine grief he had come to perceive at the heart of creation, and deep within his own heart.

¹⁵⁵ Arthur Kleinman, *Writing at the Margin: Discourse Between Anthropology and Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 10. See Emily M. Ahern, “The Problem of Efficacy: Strong and Weak Illocutionary Acts,” *Man* 14 (1979) 1–17.

¹⁵⁶ Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 159–78.

Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations

■ Melanie Adrian [Ph.D. 2007]

Restricting the Republic: France, the Veil, and Religious Freedom

This dissertation examines the debate around the banning of the Muslim headscarf in public schools in France. It employs an ethnographic methodology and draws on literature in anthropology, political, and legal theory, and religious studies. This project examines the reasons why Muslim women veil and argues that their values, such as equality and the right to choose, do not run counter to publicly held norms. They consider themselves both Muslim *and* French and live their faith in continual negotiation with their immediate environment. This negotiation renders their Islam uniquely local and therefore distinctly French. Non-Muslims, however, see their insistence on wearing the veil as an affront to acceptable behavior in the public sphere and evidence of their unwillingness to integrate into French culture. This tension calls for a new understanding of socio-political integration, which I call *restricted integration*. Such restricted integration allows for manifestation of religion and identity and does not threaten these shared norms.

In 2004, France passed a law banning religious symbols in public schools because, it was argued, it would help to integrate marginalized populations, to protect young women from the pressures to veil, and to restore calm to areas prone to social upheaval. They legitimated the restriction on the right to religious freedom by using the concept of *laïcité*—France’s version of separation of state and religion—and by a call for public order within the context of international human rights law. France also used cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights to substantiate its position. This thesis examines the grounds of France’s claims and argues that *laïcité* does not mandate a particular restriction on religious freedom. Secondly, it holds that the French government did not prove the existence of a threat to public order. And lastly, the thesis takes up critical cases brought before the European Court and argues that a fear of Islam drove the judgments which allowed for a too-wide margin of appreciation.

■ Erik Braun [Ph.D. 2008]

Ledi Sayadaw, Abhidhamma, and the Development of the Modern Insight Meditation Movement in Burma

Scholars in Buddhist Studies and related fields have long acknowledged the Burmese monk Ledi Sayadaw (1846–1923) as an important figure in the start of the modern insight meditation (*vipassanā*) movement in Burma, yet no scholarly work to date has focused on his specific role in shaping that movement. This dissertation is an intellectual biography of Ledi Sayadaw that analyzes the nature and extent of his contributions to the complex origins of insight meditation in the modern era.

This study connects the events of Ledi Sayadaw's life—from his birth in the Konbaung dynasty of Burmese kings to his death in the fully entrenched British colonial state—to particular texts he authored that shed light on his understanding of what meditation is and what it can do. His writings show that his vision of the ideal Buddhist life for the laity stressed doctrinal study, especially of the Abhidhamma, in addition to simplified meditative practices formulated through an Abhidhammic perspective. Using print technology, preaching, and social organizations, Ledi Sayadaw promoted meditation and study as key means for Buddhists to make sense of the modern world. Doctrinal study and meditative practice were understood to work together in a Buddhist's life for soteriological and social benefits.

Examination of Ledi Sayadaw's life and work offers not just the chance to understand local circumstances in Burma that contributed to meditation's modern efflorescence; it also offers the opportunity to view how a conservative figure negotiated the disjuncture between the pre-colonial world in which he was born and the challenges to Buddhism presented by the colonial transformation of Burmese society. Pre-colonial knowledge and practices served as the resources for Ledi Sayadaw's development of meditation as he responded to the perceived threats posed by the technological developments, societal fragmentation, and missionary attacks of the colonial period. Ledi Sayadaw stands as an example of someone who had clear connections to a pre-colonial heritage, even while he reformulated Burmese Buddhism into a modern form that promoted insight meditation as a mass movement.

■ Jason T. Clower [Ph.D. 2008]

The Unlikely Buddhologist Mou Zongsan (1909–1995)

Mou Zongsan (1909–1995), the leading light of Chinese philosophy in the last century, has influenced the study of philosophy and religion in greater China as deeply as Heidegger did in Europe and he is remembered for trying to revive Confucian philosophy by using ideas that he mined from the largely forgotten philosophy of Tiantai Buddhism.

Although well-known for this interest, Mou, first and last a Confucian apologist, did not explain clearly why he cared so much about Buddhist philosophy and why

he put it at the center of his work and thought. To that end I have tried to reconstruct and to explain Mou's mature opinions about the content and significance of Buddhist philosophy and his reasons for commending it to Confucian philosophers. Through research into Mou's nearly unstudied two-volume normative history of Buddhist philosophy, *Buddhaness and Prajñā* (*Foxing yu boruo*) in concert with his writings about metaphysics and Confucian philosophy, I have arrived at interpretive conclusions about his missing definitions and arguments with which I can make sense of his explicit statements.

Simply put, Mou thought that he and other Confucians could capitalize on a great Buddhist philosophic breakthrough. He adapted a technique of doxography (*panjiao*) from the Tiantai tradition of Buddhism tradition, whereby he analyzed philosophic systems according to what they say about the relationship of ultimate value to the universe of objects and endorsed those systems which claim that the ultimate value is "paradoxically identical" to the universe of objects in some fashion. Mou thought that Confucians can use such a scheme to solve one of their great intramural disputes and conclude that humans who attain spiritual perfection will find the world perfect just as it is and will be rewarded for their efforts with happiness.

■ Carly Daniel-Hughes [Th.D. 2008]

Dressing for the Resurrection: Dress as Embodied Theology in Tertullian of Carthage

Why in the midst of heated third-century debates about creation and resurrection did the Christian writer, Tertullian of Carthage, pause to write to his community about the seemingly mundane matters like women's toiletries and veiling or men's attire?

Previous feminist scholarship has often separated Tertullian's theology from his exhortations on dress, seeing the former as articulating a notion of spiritual gender equality. Alternately, scholars have read his comments, particularly on women's dress, largely as the result of male politics without reference to his larger theological agendas. This study employs a methodology that refuses to foreground theology or practice and shows that Tertullian, and the female members of his community, signified dress differently in order to manifest or contest theological conceptions of the created order and salvation along with the gendered status of Christians in relation to these states.

This study indicates how dress functions rhetorically for Tertullian to enact his theological conceptions by first examining polemical writings about human nature and the resurrection in *De anima*, *De carne Christi*, and *De resurrectione mortuorum*. There the fleshly body and sexual difference are said to be good as created by God. On the other hand, he figures this difference in terms of a hierarchy of male over female as permanent and imagines the flesh as ever in threat of corruption and decay. A survey of select Roman materials indicates a discourse of modesty upon

which Tertullian draws strategically in his writings on dress, *De cultu feminarum I & II*, *De pallio*, and *De virginibus velandis*, in order to produce a distinctive Christian identity by tying the *palla* for women and the *pallium* for men to his theological worldview. But he also signifies these gendered dress practices differently. Where men's dress manifests a Christian ethnic masculine identity that is non-Roman, women's dress naturalizes his view of the permanence of women's subordination to men through the performance of modesty. Consequently, this analysis draws out how his insistence upon the repeated performance of his gendered worldview showcases how virgin women could and did contest it every time they refuse to cover their heads.

Ultimately by reading Tertullian's treatises on the resurrection and soul with his writings on dress, this study foregrounds the thoroughly gendered nature of his theological worldview. But this conclusion also indicates that there remains an opportunity for constructive feminist theological engagement that moves away from the false presumption that his treatises on the resurrection and creation posit spiritual parity between women and men. Instead, the space for possible engagement might reside in his positive views of embodiment and sexual difference necessitating, however, the critical and analytical tools to grapple with the profound interconnections between his essentialized gender hierarchy and all other aspects of his thought.

■ Timothy S. Dobe [Th.D. 2007]

Faqīrs in the Colony: Rāma Tīrtha, Sundar Singh, and Comparative Sainthood in the Punjab (1849–1929)

This dissertation studies the construction of sainthood in the colonial Punjab (1849–1929). It focuses on the lives of two ascetic "saints": the Hindu Rāma Tīrtha (1873–1906) and the Sikh convert to Christianity Sundar Singh (1889–1929?). My thesis proposes that asceticism in this context constitutes both 1) a shared norm of religious exemplarity grounded in local culture, and 2) a politically charged embodiment of a resistant Indian identity in the public sphere. As such, asceticism forms a constitutive element in the modern construction of the "sainthood" of both persons. While a modern person may naturally assume that Indian saints, even modern ones, would practice asceticism, this study problematizes this assumption by articulating the complex set of historical conditions under which the historically different practices of asceticism and sainthood emerged in the modern colonial period of India as intimately connected. In particular, the critiques of living Indian asceticism by nineteenth-century Protestant and Enlightenment thinkers and the evocations of India's past mystical golden age by nationalist Hindus set the stage on which the ascetics Rāma Tīrtha and Sundar Singh could emerge in the public sphere as saints. The study focuses attention on the ways in which these emergent ascetic figures employed western rhetoric and concepts in the modern context but, at the same time, resisted the privatized and belief-centered forms of modern

religion, which the Empire had brought in. More specifically, I examine the self-understandings of Rāma Tīrtha and Sundar Singh as *faqīrs*, who practiced poverty, celibacy, and wandering in a region where religions had long shared asceticism as a norm. Both *faqīrs* drew on ascetic culture and practices in Punjabi and pan-Indian “saffronized” forms in order to pursue distinctively Hindu and Christian visions of a transformed self, to represent themselves as exemplary and authoritative figures, and to make strong claims about the essence of Indian religious identity and its fulfillment. Perched on the edge of, but ultimately shunning, explicit political activism or leadership, Rāma Tīrtha and Sundar Singh remained “spiritual” figures. In keeping with the ascetic traditions of their region, however, they preserved the worldliness of Punjabi asceticism by engaging in contests of power and by using ascetic discipline to pursue and to contest the shape of modern religion.

■ Mary Corley Dunn [Ph.D. 2008]

Sainte-Anne-duPetit-Cap: The Making of an Early Modern Shrine

My dissertation examines the making of the shrine to Saint Anne at Petit-Cap (now Beauré) and situates the development of this devotion in the latter half of the seventeenth century within the received tradition of scholarship on early modern Catholicism. Traditional historiography tends to understand early modern Catholicism in terms of disjuncture and conflict—whether between medieval and early modern, Protestant and Catholic, “popular” and “elite,” clergy and laity, urban and rural, or even “civilized” and “savage.” My research, however, suggests that the story of early modern Catholicism—at least as refracted through the experience of making the shrine to Saint Anne—is perhaps *not* one best told by a hermeneutic of difference.

I argue in my dissertation that making the shrine to Saint Anne at Petit-Cap speaks to an early modern Catholicism defined as much by conflict and difference as by cooperation and convergence. The cult of Saint Anne as it emerged at Petit-Cap during those formative years suggests an early modern Catholicism not wholly divorced from the medieval Catholicism for which it so often serves as a foil. From its focus on Saint Anne (of all saints), to its emphasis on the practice of pilgrimage, to its enthusiasm for astonishing cures and incredible rescues, devotion at the seventeenth-century shrine at Petit-Cap continued to manifest tendencies towards the miraculous, the material, and the immanent. Moreover, while the history of the shrine at Petit-Cap indeed betrays the presence of conflict—not only between the usual suspects but also within the class of clerics (between, for example, Jesuit and Sulpician), within the class of élites (between, for example, bishops and Intendants), and within the class of “natives” (between, for example, the Christian Huron and the Iroquois who remained committed to traditional beliefs and practices)—close analysis suggests an early modern Catholicism defined at least as much by collaboration between parties all too often rendered enemies by the historiographical tradition. The development of the devotion at Petit-Cap owes as much to the manual

labor of the ordinary *habitant* as to the elaborate ex-voto donated by Intendant de Tracy, as much to the enthusiasm of the citizens of cities like Québec and Montréal as to the fidelity of the rural seigneurial tenants, and as much to the support of the French crown as to the piety of the Amerindians converts.

By looking organically at the community at Petit-Cap, complete with bishop, curé, indentured servant, seigneur, men, women, state officials, noble élite, missionary, and Huron convert, I hope to succeed in abandoning this hermeneutic of difference in favor of an alternative approach to understanding the nature of early modern Catholicism in all its complexity.

■ Linda Ellison [Th.D. 2008]

Abortion and the Politics of God: Patient Narratives and Public Rhetoric in the American Abortion Debate

In this dissertation I seek to understand more about the abortion experiences of women, who for political and religious reasons, oppose abortion. Yet they undergo one or many abortion procedures anyway.

I study conservative Christian American women, who have had abortions. I use data collected from individual interview sessions that I conducted with 729 conservative Christian women after their abortion procedures in Boston, New York City, and Washington, D.C., from 2002–2006. Individual interviews lasted sixty minutes per session, and most women in the study volunteered for multiple interviews over the course of months or even a year. A subset of the women individually interviewed in Boston also participated in small-group interview sessions that met for seventy-five minutes weekly for periods of four months each. All women interviewees gave their written, informed consent. I recorded and transcribed the sessions and later analyzed the data using Atlas.ti.

In this study I confined my interviews to a sample group of women, but this study may apply to a broader American context. My study finds that for women considering abortion, their pregnancy concerns what “could be” but has “not yet” happened. This consideration represents a deeply American idea of a Lacanian imaginary in which a potential child differs vastly from the empirical, material child that the pro-life side of the debate describes. Overwhelmingly, conservative Christian women having abortions operate under a cultural model that abortion does not equal murder and that a fetus does not equal an actual child. Rather, an abortion equals the passing up of an opportunity, and a fetus equals not an empirical child but the potential of a child.

■ Linford D. Fisher [Th.D. 2008]

“Traditionary Religion”: The Great Awakening and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Southern New England, 1736–1776

This dissertation explores the ways in which religious practices and religious conversions became important sites of cultural negotiation between American Indians of southern New England and their Anglo-European counterparts in the eighteenth century. Although the process of cultural adaptation and change was ongoing, this particular period began in the 1730s with several non-Christian Native communities on relatively large tracts of land in Connecticut and Rhode Island and on Long Island (New York) and ended in the 1780s with the voluntary emigration of hundreds of then-Christianized Indians from Narragansett, Mohegan, Pequot, Montaukett, Farmington, and Niantic communities to Brotherton, a newly-formed Christian Indian community carved out of Oneida territory in upstate New York. In attempting to understand how these changes came about, I argue that in the years leading up to the Great Awakening, Native Americans selectively utilized English offers of cultural and religious education in order to improve their own standing in larger colonial society. In the Great Awakening, many Indians found themselves at a cultural crossroads, and chose to publicly affiliate with Christianity in part, at least, in hopes of finding practical aid in their ongoing land disputes with colonial officials. The result was a generation of Natives who practiced incorporative versions of Indian Christianities that the Mohegan minister Samson Occom termed “traditionary religion.” In the thirty years following the revivals, the generation of Indians who experienced the Great Awakening slowly began to reject most forms of Anglo-American religious involvement or supervision, first in terms of churches, then in terms of education, and finally, in terms of association and geographical proximity.

■ Tamsin Jones Farmer [Th.D. 2008]

Apparent Darkness: Jean-Luc Marion’s Retrieval of the Greek Apophatic Tradition

This study analyzes the use of patristic sources, specifically those of Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius the Areopagite, within the writing of Jean-Luc Marion (1946–). This analysis functions as an illuminating lens through which I evaluate a fundamental tension within Marion’s philosophical project. I locate this tension between “givenness” and “saturation,” between the radical manifestation and the endless hiddenness of phenomena, and finally, between the universality of a rigorous method and the contextuality of infinite interpretation.

Using textual analysis and philosophic argumentation, I place Marion’s apophatic phenomenology in direct conversation with the patristic authors. My analysis proceeds along the following lines. First, I argue that, from his earliest publications onwards, patristic sources function in Marion rhetorically as an

“authoritative” (orthodox) foundation for his contemporary engagements. For this apologetic reason, Marion retrieves the premodern sources in a strangely univocal manner despite indisputable evidence of his capacity for greater sophistication. Second, I challenge this univocal reading of Gregory of Nyssa and Dionysius, in particular, by comparing their theories of *apophasis* and the distinct ontological assumptions contained therein. Third, I argue that Marion’s double importation of Dionysius and Gregory (*in voce* Dionysius) highlights a tension that exists within Marion’s philosophy in itself. On the one hand, Dionysius gives him the language and conceptual framework for treating revelation as simultaneous manifestation and concealment. On the other hand, Marion cites Gregory whenever he develops either a purely “pragmatic” theory of discourse or the originary gap between the “given” and the “phenomenal.” Dionysius satisfies Marion’s yearning for a language of givenness that is universal without being idolatrous, while Gregory feeds Marion’s more recent discussions of an “endless hermeneutics” arising out of saturated phenomena.

Since Marion does not differentiate between Dionysius and Gregory, he has not recognized or utilized the two thinkers according to what each one distinctly has to offer. In this way, my study demonstrates the risk of contemporary retrievals of patristic thought—that one imports more than was bargained for—and the rich potential of such a retrieval that offers a way of thinking outside the paradigms regnant in continental thought today.

■ Mary T. Kantor [Th.D. 2008]

Holy Desires: An Ecclesiological Study of the Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity for Women Living in the World

The Rite of Consecration to a Life of Virginity for Women Living in the World, ancient custom then liturgical rite of the Roman Catholic Church, dates from the first centuries of the Christian Church, and is used by the Church today. The current rite comes from the Second Vatican Council’s reforms of the Church and its liturgical life. This dissertation argues that the rite—the text, consecrated virgins’ experiences of the rite, their living a consecrated life in the world through this rite—has the potential to magnify an element and dimension of ecclesiology, particularly an ecclesiology of Church in the world. The Church, and the broader culture, provides witness to women who fully live in the world, yet embrace that which is not yet fully present in the world—a divine spouse they experience in Jesus Christ.

This dissertation provides an overview of the rite’s development, and textual analysis of its language of virgin, mother, bride/spouse—language used for consecrated virgins and for the Church—drawing on historical, patristic, ecclesial and liturgical sources; an overview of the Church’s developing practices of the rite in the United States, an accounting not yet provided by or for the Church or the academy; contextualization of the rite and of consecrated life in ecclesial and canonical frameworks of the Church.

This study of consecrated virgins, individually and corporately, uses sociological analysis (a national survey gathered demographics and information on these women's involvement in the Church, and their current status in the world) to provide the first statistics in tracking the history of this vocation in the United States. Extensive personal interviews for this dissertation are the first compilation of individual testimonies since the rite's return in the 1970s, giving voice to approximately one-third of the consecrated virgins in the United States.

From these women's voices and this examination of the rite, theological, ecclesiological meaning is drawn forth, providing understandings of how the consecration liturgy shapes and influences these women's lives and may influence the world. Recommendations and observations are offered from the perspectives of the academy, the Church, pastoral practice, and theology.

■ Brent Landau [Th.D. 2008]

The Sages and the Star-Child: An Introduction to the Revelation of the Magi, An Ancient Christian Apocryphon

This study analyzes a poorly-known ancient Christian apocryphal writing, the *Revelation of the Magi*. This document purports to be the personal testimony of the biblical Magi on the coming of Christ, and is the longest and most complex narrative devoted to the Magi surviving from antiquity. The first chapter is a critical edition of the Syriac text of this apocryphon as found in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, an eighth-century world chronicle preserved in a single manuscript, codex Vaticanus Syriacus 162. The corresponding annotated English translation is the first of its kind for this text.

The second chapter compares the Syriac text with a much shorter version of the narrative contained in the *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum*, an Arian commentary on the Gospel of Matthew from the fifth century. It concludes that the *Opus* is a witness to a Greek version of this apocryphon and is essentially equivalent to the received Syriac. The third chapter attempts to trace the prehistory of the text prior to its fifth-century form, and argues that the earliest form of the text was a pseud-epigraphon, written from the putative perspective of the Magi themselves. This text, which was composed in the late-second or early-third century, was redacted in the third or fourth century to include a third-person account of the Apostle Judas Thomas's conversion of the Magi.

The fourth chapter investigates the use of foundational Christian writings by the *Revelation of the Magi*. Although the text is obviously dependent upon Matthew for its basic narrative structure, the terminology and theology of the Gospel of John are much more influential, especially since the text portrays the Magi's star as Christ in luminous form—the literal “light of the world.” The fifth and final chapter argues that the text employs two different modes of religious diffusion: divine universal revelation and human mission. Its presentation of divine revelation has particular consequences for understanding the origins of religious difference. According to

the *Revelation of the Magi*, because Christ can appear to anyone, in any place, at any time, he is actually the wellspring of all of humanity's religious traditions.

■ Simon S. Lee [Th.D. 2008]

Jesus' Transfiguration and the Believers' Transformation: A Study of the Transfiguration and Its Development in Early Christian Writings

In my dissertation, I examine the Transfiguration story of Jesus found in the narrative accounts of the Synoptic Gospels and trace its trajectories of multiple readings through the first two centuries of the Christian era, especially focusing on texts where Peter is described as the main witness to the event—Synoptic Gospels, Paul, 2 Peter, *Apocalypse of Peter*, and *Acts of Peter*.

The Transfiguration, where Jesus appears in a glorious form with Elijah and Moses, is such a fascinating and complicated story. Modern scholarship on this topic seems to have exclusively focused on possible backgrounds or sources for the Transfiguration and on literary dependencies among various documents containing the story. In my dissertation, I considered these sources as parts of the dynamic process of complicated development of the Transfiguration and explored their trajectories—both forward and backward—through various narrative accounts, rather than focusing on their literary dependencies. Also, I emphasized the socio-historical aspects of the texts by showing how the development of the idea of the Transfiguration reflected ancient readers' historical contexts. In this development process, it seems that both specific historical events and multiple Jewish as well as Hellenistic ideas contributed to the various interpretations of the Transfiguration. In this sense, the textual instances of the Transfiguration may offer us some indirect information on the emergence of various Christian groups of people that emerged in conjunction with ideological trends of the times—both Jewish and Hellenistic. These instances further tell us how they modified the trends in ways that were distinctive to their self-identity and met their communal needs.

■ Amod Jayant Lele [Ph.D. 2008]

Ethical Revaluation in the Thought of Śāntideva

This dissertation examines the idea of *ethical revaluation*—taking things we normally see as good for our flourishing and seeing them instead as neutral or bad, and vice versa—in the Mahāyāna Buddhist thinker Śāntideva. It shows how Śāntideva's thought on the matter is more coherent than it might initially appear, first by examining the consistency of Śāntideva's own claims and then by applying them to contemporary ethical thought. In so doing, this dissertation makes four significant contributions.

Śāntideva claims that property and relationships are bad for human beings because they promote attachment, and that others' wrongdoing is good for humans because it allows individuals to generate patient endurance. Yet he also urges his

readers to give property to others, and to prevent the wrongdoing of others. Is he caught in contradiction? The dissertation argues that he is not, because giving to others is not intended to benefit the recipient materially, but rather to produce beneficial mental states in them, and preventing wrongdoing is intended to benefit the potential wrongdoer and not the would-be victim. In both cases, Śāntideva emphasizes individual action in a way that makes social or political action more difficult to justify. The dissertation's first contribution, then, is to demonstrate a very different interpretation of Śāntideva that contrasts notably with standard presentations of Mahāyāna ethics. Its second contribution is to refute claims that Buddhists have no normative ethics.

Śāntideva's resolutions of these apparent contradictions also have relevance for contemporary ethical thought. Martha Nussbaum argues against an ethical revaluation similar to Śāntideva's, on the grounds that such a revaluation makes it contradictory to argue for providing goods to others, preventing others from wrongdoing, or engaging in political action. Śāntideva's views show that ethical revaluation is a more sustainable position than these criticisms of Nussbaum's would imply. The third contribution of this work is to show that if ethical revaluation is to be rejected, it must be rejected on other grounds. The fourth contribution is methodological: It helps bridge the gap between normative and comparative religious ethics by finding similarities of concern and differences of opinion between Śāntideva and a contemporary thinker.

■ Anna Criscinda Miller [Ph.D. 2008]

Ekklēsia: 1 Corinthians in the Context of Ancient Democratic Discourse

This dissertation investigates and reconstructs a vital discourse centered on the democratic, civic *ekklēsia* in the early Roman Empire, demonstrating this discourse's place in the rhetorical construction of the early Christian letter 1 Corinthians. Scholars of ancient history and the New Testament have widely dismissed the civic *ekklēsia*, the assembly, as a functioning institution or source of social knowledge in the first century. By contrast, this dissertation argues that this period knew a widespread *ekklēsia* discourse that originated with the civic assembly, but expanded into numerous other sites to constitute logic and *topoi* associated with constructions of ancient democracy. With a fresh examination of first-century Greek texts, the dissertation maps the contours of *ekklēsia* discourse in various sites including education, civic government, and the reinterpretation of biblical narrative by the Jewish writer Josephus. While this examination draws out key *topoi* of *ekklēsia* discourse including communal discernment, citizen speech and freedom, it also explores the role of the discourse in critical debates over citizen participation and leadership. Mapping this wider *ekklēsia* discourse in the first century facilitates a new consideration of the struggles and debates visible in the first letter to the Corinthians.

A rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians indicates that both Paul and the Corinthians deploy *ekklēsia* discourse towards a construction of this community as a democratic assembly. This construction features the authority of the assembly as a decision-making body and the exercise of leadership through persuasive speech. However, the rhetoric of 1 Corinthians also shows that Paul and the Corinthians alternately mobilize *ekklēsia* discourse in struggles over leadership, participation and communal identity. While Paul's rhetoric engages an *ekklēsia* discourse designed to promote hierarchy and his own position as an apostolic leader, the Corinthians mobilize a competing discourse towards an egalitarian vision of community that emphasizes the open participation of free "citizens." While providing significant insight into one early Christian community and its relationship with the apostle Paul, a focus on *ekklēsia* discourse in first-century literature also suggests new possibilities for the way we interpret community dynamics and debates over leadership, freedom and equality in the early Roman Empire.

■ Brenna Moore [Th.D. 2008]

'Leaning Over the Abyss': Raïssa Maritain, the Allure of Suffering, and the French Catholic Revival

Although the name Raïssa Maritain (1883–1960) occasionally surfaces in the study of French Catholicism alongside that of her celebrated husband Jacques Maritain, her own writings have received scarce critical attention. This omission is significant considering her extensive activity in a range of intellectual communities in Europe and the United States. As a key player in the twentieth-century French Catholic revival, Raïssa Maritain published several books of poetry, wrote theological texts on contemplative prayer, intellectual life, mysticism, aesthetics, and as a Jewish convert, on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. One goal of this project is to open up Maritain's works to English-speaking readers.

But Maritain's life and writings also offer a way to focus a broader question about how to understand the widespread attraction to theologies and practices that center on suffering and anguish—a central feature of French Catholic revival writings. Like many critics of atheistic positivism in France, the themes in Maritain's own works are undeniably dark, and she rarely veers her attention away from the suffering of the cross, the affliction of the soul, and the tears of the Virgin. While Maritain deepened and expanded this tradition, she also modified it and continued to do so throughout her life. Symbols and practices around anguish were consistently intellectually and emotionally provocative, but they were also highly malleable. My analysis tracks these changes from 1900–1944. Raïssa Maritain was a Jewish convert and one of the few women in this intellectual circuit, and I pay particular attention to her engagement with the long-standing association in French Catholicism between suffering and women, and suffering and Jews.

Using the methods of close textual analysis and historical-cultural investigation, the chapters proceed thematically and chronologically. I begin with Maritain's 1906

conversion to Catholicism and proceed through her experiences and writings in interwar France, and finish with her exile in New York during World War II. The final chapter is an opportunity to track the fate of the French Catholic valorization of redemptive *souffrance* when it came in contact with the central trauma of European history in 1940–1944. Maritain's refusal to overlay the Holocaust with meanings of redemptive suffering and her simultaneous turn to sanctified suffering as a project of memory suggests a need to think carefully about the relationship between memory and the power of theologies of suffering in the context of an unthinkable present.

■ Toviss Page [Ph.D. 2008]

The Problem of the Land is the Problem of the Woman: A Genealogy of Ecofeminism at Grailville

This dissertation brings current theoretical understandings of the relationship between religion, gender, and ecology to bear upon a sociohistorical analysis of the evolution of the U.S. Grail at its main center in southwestern Ohio at Grailville. Founded in the Netherlands in the 1920s, the Grail today is a small international women's movement with a spirit of high idealism and deep roots in the Roman Catholic tradition. Grailville, a partially converted old farm on 300 acres of land, has been the organizational heart of the U.S. Grail since 1944.

A genealogy of ecofeminism at Grailville demonstrates that the roots of ecofeminism extend farther back than, and well beyond the bounds of, the radical political movements of the 1970s and '80s with which it is commonly identified. Proceeding in reverse chronological order and drawing on archival and ethnographic sources, the dissertation first examines the emergence of ecofeminism at Grailville in the late 1970s through '90s and then the midcentury forms of praxis that facilitated its emergence. At Grailville in the 1940s and '50s, women cobbled together new ideological variants out of the discourses of surrendering womanhood, valiant lay sainthood, and Catholic rural life. Although explicitly opposed to feminism and endorsing an instrumentalist appraisal of nature, the Grail's early ideals of valiant Catholic womanhood and Catholic rural life—when deliberately “lived” at Grailville—cultivated modes of subjectivity that emerged later as forms of feminism, environmentalism, and ecofeminism.

This study complements work already done on the U.S. Grail and Grailville by focusing on the persistent emphases on women and the land and on the longstanding effort to “make ideas live.” In doing so, it establishes Grailville as an important site of preconciliar Catholic agrarianism as well as later forms of ecofeminism, and it places Grailville along the spectrum of U.S. forms of “lived religion.” With respect to the interdisciplinary study of religion, gender, and ecology, the dissertation makes several contributions. It deepens and broadens scholarly accounts of ecofeminism; it demonstrates the importance of historical, ethnographic, and case-

study approaches; and it highlights the eco-social implications of understanding embodied practice—including ritual practice—as pedagogical and normative.

■ Cameron Elliot Partridge [Th.D. 2008]

Transfiguring Sexual Difference in Maximus the Confessor

This dissertation studies the conception of sexual difference in the thought of Maximus the Confessor (580–662 C.E.). It focuses in particular upon several enigmatic phrases in Ambiguum 41, which describe first the human person and then Jesus Christ as “shaking out of nature the distinctive characteristics of male and female, . . . driving out of nature the difference and division of male and female, [and] . . . removing the difference between male and female” (PG 91.1305 C, 1309 A, and 1309 D). These statements have appeared to contemporary scholars to conflict with the broader shape of Maximus’s thought because they find in the Confessor a theological vision of cosmic unity in distinctions, a positive valuation of material creation, and his position, amid the seventh-century Monothelite controversy, that Christ had two wills stemming from his human and divine natures. By contrast, I argue that the removal of “male and female” in Ambiguum 41 does not conflict with, but rather plays a crucial role in Maximus’s vision of the transfiguration of creation. The key to understanding Maximus’s language of sexual purgation, as I argue in chapter three, lies in its link with his notion of the human person as bond [σύνδεσμος] of the cosmos. In chapter four I argue that the notion of “male and female” in Maximus’s anthropology relates in an important way to his Christology, not by a parallel to the presence of two wills in Christ, but rather by the absence of two key volitional modalities in Christ, γνώμη and προαίρεσις, deliberative will and free choice, respectively. The removal of male and female in human beings and the absence of deliberative will and free choice in Christ mirror each other because of their connection in Maximus’s notion of “original transgression.” Chapters one and two treat two key predecessors of Maximus, Gregory of Nyssa and Nemesius of Emesa, and show how each theologian defines sexual difference in relation to the organization of the cosmos in ways that likely influenced Maximus.

■ Mark Stephen Murray Scott [Ph.D. 2008]

Cosmic Theodicy: Origen on the Problem of Evil

In my dissertation I examine Origen of Alexandria’s (185–254 C.E.) treatment of the problem of evil. I undertake a major re-evaluation of the salient themes of his theodicy, which include the pre-existence of souls, the fall, creation, and universal salvation. Origen casts the problem of evil into cosmic relief. His layered cosmology functions as a theodicy that attempts to explain cosmic disparity and unjust suffering. The themes of his theodicy unfold through the narrative of the soul’s journey from pre-existent bliss to its fall, purification, and deification when God will restore cosmic harmony. According to Origen, God acts as a kind Father,

Teacher, and Physician, who employs suffering—even the suffering that we inflict on ourselves—for our betterment. My analysis incorporates both his speculative philosophical works, such as *De Principiis*, and his often neglected homilies and biblical commentaries. It unites the speculative and exegetical aspects of his theodicy. For Origen, the logical problem of evil remains deeply interconnected with the moral problem of evil; one cannot dissociate them.

My dissertation contributes to the theorization of theodicy. I develop an interdisciplinary approach called “theodicy as navigation.” It draws from sociological, anthropological, psychological, philosophical, and theological conceptions of theodicy in order to argue that theodicy attempts to create and to sustain meaning in the face of inexplicable suffering. It constitutes the process by which we integrate evil into a larger theological narrative. It clarifies and corrects the following five major issues in Origen scholarship: 1) Philosophy—I subvert the disjunctive portrayals of Origen as either a Platonist or a Christian and take an integrative approach to his identity; 2) Pre-existence—I reconsider his theory of pre-existence by illustrating its Christological bent; 3) Creation—I show that Origen held a positive view of the salvific value of creation; 4) Soteriology—I argue that the logic of his theodicy entails universal salvation, including the Devil, despite his ambivalence on this question; 5) Pedagogy—I elucidate the pastoral and intellectual dimensions of his dual pedagogy.

■ John Chapin Seitz [Ph.D. 2008]

No Closure: Catholic Practice and Boston's Parish Shutdowns

In 2004 the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston announced the closure of more than eighty of its 357 parishes. In the months that followed, parishioners at several closing parishes took over and occupied their churches in opposition to the closure decrees. They sought to save their parishes by persuading the archdiocese to rescind the closure decision. In the meantime, the church occupiers, or “perpetual vigilers” as they called themselves, took responsibility for the buildings and the rituals for those who stayed on. This project seeks to explain why Catholics resisted and what that resistance says about twentieth- and twenty-first-century U.S. Catholicism.

Drawing on historical and anthropological methods of inquiry, I explain the anxieties and upheaval around the church closings in Boston in terms of Catholics' struggles with the changing meanings of sacrifice and sacred presence. The period from the 1960s through the 1970s launched a continuing set of theological exchanges and contestations across and with the Catholic past on these themes. The ambition of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) to combine continuity with change involved more than a description of the project of reform; it presented an ongoing puzzle for the churches and the individual Catholics within them. Boston's resisting Catholics lived inside these tensions of “modern” Catholic theology.

In Chapters 1, 2, and 4, I use the histories of parish, archdiocese, and Church, as well as broader social histories to track the changes in the rules of the “practicing

parish.” Calls for sacrifice that enjoined ownership of the church by parishioners as “the people of God” replaced the rationales for sacrifice that once promised to infuse the local parish with Church glory. Reform of the ancient rite of church dedication in the 1970s aimed to replace overflowing presence in Catholic locales with presence concentrated in the eucharist and in the gathered congregation. Boston’s parish closures threw Catholics into an uneasy reengagement with these changing theologies of sacrifice and presence. Chapters 3 and 5 of this dissertation draw on fieldwork within the resisting parishes in order to show that these occupying Catholics took up the resistance, and their sense of belonging in the Church, as eager but troubled interlocutors of Catholic modernity.

■ Sarah Sentilles [Th.D. 2008]

Just Looking: Theological Language, Ethics, and Photographs of Violence

This dissertation has two parts. In part one I analyze the theological language that emerges in the writings of three theorists of photography: Roland Barthes, John Berger, and Susan Sontag. They employ theological language when writing about photography’s ability to transgress limitations and when describing the encounter between viewers and photographs. I interrogate the viewing practices that Barthes, Berger, and Sontag outline and propose that theological language offers resources for constructing an alternate form of ethical looking.

In part two I build on the theoretical framework developed in part one and investigate the reception of the Abu Ghraib photographs as crucifixion images. Many who insisted on the publication of the photographs from Abu Ghraib, ascribed to a “politics of empathy.” They assumed that the images would elicit an emotional response that would in turn lead to action against the violence depicted in the photographs. Empathy, however, has not comprised the only response to the photographs. The photographs have elicited a wide range of response including moral outrage, triumphalism, warmongering, indifference, sexism, sexual fantasy, racism, and humor. Such varied reception disrupts the common assumption that viewing representations of violence necessarily leads to empathy and that empathy necessarily leads to beneficent action on behalf of those pictured. Through a critical analysis of the Abu Ghraib photographs as crucifixion images, I propose that viewers trade the seemingly definitive knowledge of the other that such a reading promises for a different mode of relation in which the photographed other is both real and essentially unknowable. Certain aspects of the Christian theological tradition, those rooted in thinking about and living with the unknowability of God, offer resources for turning such mystery into an ethical category. Although photographs and narratives about photographs seem to “capture” the other, viewers must resist this illusion and recognize that claiming to know an other may constitute a form of violence in itself. Viewing the other as real and unknowable may create opportunities for ethical relationships to emerge.

■ Robert N. St. Hilaire II [Th.D. 2008]

Desire Divided: Nature and Grace in the Neo-Thomism of Pierre Rousselot

This study explores the early work of the French neo-Thomist Pierre Rousselot, S.J. (1878–1915). Rousselot, a theologian of major significance in twentieth-century Catholic thought, influenced Henri de Lubac, Joseph Maréchal, Karl Rahner, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, all of whom express an indebtedness to his thought. Among his many philosophical and theological contributions, Rousselot set the stage for *la nouvelle théologie*, a controversial and influential movement within Catholic theology that insisted in new and radical ways on the intimate integration of nature and grace.

This study explicates in particular Rousselot's understanding of the relationship between nature and grace in the works of Thomas Aquinas. Rousselot offers his interpretation of Thomas primarily in his major thesis, *L'Intellectualisme de saint Thomas*, which he published in 1908. Rousselot focuses on Thomas's doctrine of the intelligent creature's "natural desire to see God" (*desiderium naturale visionis Dei*), especially as Thomas presents it in the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Compendium theologiae*.

As this study demonstrates, Rousselot's reading of Thomas amounts to a tacit response to the philosophical apologetics of Maurice Blondel (1861–1949). Blondel's treatise *L'action*, published in 1893, had exercised considerable influence in Rousselot's day. Rousselot tries to show that Thomas's metaphysical approach to "intelligence" (*intellectus*) anticipates Blondel's teaching on the openness or receptivity of human existence to a saving God and eternal life. Yet Rousselot also endeavors to prove, in contrast to Blondel's philosophy, that Thomas safeguards the natural power of reason to know reality apart from faith and grace. Rousselot thus finds a delicate balance in Thomas's thought between the intellect's innate dynamism toward God and the natural integrity of its rational operations.

This study contributes both to the recent scholarship on twentieth-century Thomism and to a methodology of how to read Thomas today. Rousselot draws upon nineteenth-century neo-Scholasticism and the heritage of classic Thomist commentary, namely that of Tommaso de Vio Cajetan and Francisco Suárez, while, at the same time, paves the way for *la nouvelle théologie*. Rousselot's work not only reveals an interesting and fruitful moment in the history of Thomism but also offers insights into how Thomas himself conceives of the relationship between nature and grace.

■ Charles M. Stang [Th.D. 2008]

“No Longer I”: Paul, Dionysius the Areopagite, and the Apophasis of the Self

In this dissertation I argue that the pseudonym, Dionysius the Areopagite, and the influence of Paul together constitute the best interpretive lens for understanding the aims and purposes of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* [CD] and its pseudonymous author. By and large, modern scholarship on the CD has passed over the question of the pseudonym and the influence of Paul and has interpreted the corpus against the backdrop of late Neoplatonism or late antique Eastern Christianity. First, I argue, appreciating why this late-fifth- or early-sixth-century author wrote under the name of Paul’s Athenian convert, mentioned in Acts 17:34, not only alters our understanding of central themes of the CD but also resolves certain scholarly debates. Attention to the pseudonym and to the influence of Paul thus allows us to make headway on such central, but controversial, themes as hierarchy, Christology, theurgy, and apophasis. Second, when we read the CD against the backdrop of the pseudonym and the influence of Paul, I contend, the “mystical theology” of the CD reveals a corresponding “mystical anthropology,” to which Paul serves as the premier and authoritative witness. For Dionysius Paul is the exemplary lover of God, whose fervent *eros* carries him outside himself in ecstasy and therefore renders him split, which thus opens him to the indwelling of Christ. Third and finally, I argue that the practice of writing under a pseudonym, and especially this pseudonym, is for our author an ecstatic devotional practice that aims to breach the singular self—the “I”—and thereby to suffer, as Paul does, the indwelling of Christ: “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). The very writing of the CD, under this pseudonym, constitutes a practice integral to the enterprise described in the CD, a mystical, theological, and anthropological asceticism that aims to “unsay” and to “unknow” both God and self.

■ Alan Gerard Wagner [Ph.D. 2008]

Practice and Emptiness in the Discourse Record of Ruru Jushi, Yan Bing (d. 1212), a Chan Buddhist Layman of the Southern Song

In this dissertation I studied the works of one Chinese Buddhist layman, Yan Bing 顏丙, also known as Layman Ruru (Ruru jushi 如如居士, d. 1212). His extant writings survive in two editions, a handwritten manuscript of more than 400 pages and a woodblock print of 121 pages. In this rare and exceptional corpus we find a great wealth of primary material on Buddhist thought, culture, and practice in the Southern Song (1127–1279), including essays on doctrine, morality and meditation, written prayers and supplications, detailed ritual protocols, records of his formal Chan teachings, a complex diagram of the Buddhist cosmos, and essays and verses on the unity of the “Three Teachings” (Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism).

This study had two aims. First, it introduced Yan Bing to the English-speaking scholarly community by presenting a substantial volume of transcriptions and

translations from his corpus. Second, it explored the relationship between the doctrine of “emptiness” or “nonduality” on the one hand and “conventional” Buddhist morality and ritual piety on the other. Both of these religious orientations are well represented in Yan’s works. As a second-generation dharma heir of Linji Chan Master Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163), Yan emphasizes meditation and *huatou* contemplation as the fastest solution to the problem of karma and rebirth. At the same time, he strongly urges adherence to the Buddhist precepts, the cultivation of merit, and the pursuit of rebirth in Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land.

The study proceeds through a careful examination of the relationship between one’s store of karmic merit and the possibility of attaining “sudden” enlightenment; the various uses to which Yan applies the doctrine of nonduality in his preaching; and an extensive comparison with another Buddhist layman, the Pure Land devotee Wang Rixiu 王日休 (d. 1173). We find that Yan sees “conventional” religiosity as a support to the pursuit of ultimate liberation and that different understandings of “emptiness” have a tangible impact on programs of practice.

■ Adrian Weimer [Ph.D. 2008]

Protestant Sainthood: Martyrdom and the Meaning of Sanctity in Early New England

This dissertation examines the rhetoric of martyrdom in seventeenth-century Protestant culture, exploring how Puritans, Baptists, and Quakers imagined themselves within biblical and historical narratives of persecution both to strengthen their authority in matters of religion and to reinforce a model of the true spiritual life. Memories of persecution, especially stories of the Protestants killed during the reign of Queen Mary in the mid-sixteenth century, were central to a model of sanctity that had powerful devotional and political applications.

In examining how the notions of persecution and affliction move in and out of the literature of the period, I find that how early modern Protestants conceived themselves is closely related to how stories of historic suffering were appropriated by different groups. The sense of being uniquely threatened and marginalized had striking implications for intergroup conflict and for the justification of aggression against Native Americans during King Philip’s War. This examination of the historical imagination and persecution contributes to our understanding of the meaning of suffering and holiness in Protestant religious culture, of the significance of trauma on the religious experiences of future generations, and of the role of religion in justifying violence, as well as in furnishing the moral conscience.

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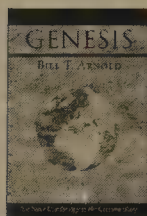
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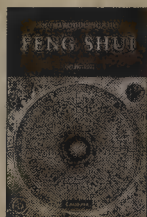
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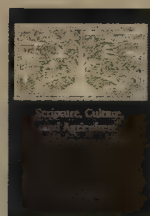
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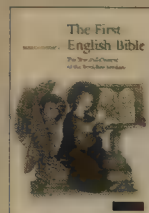
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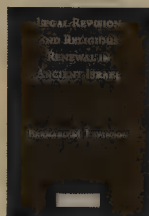
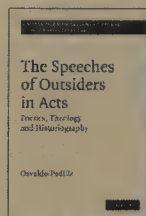
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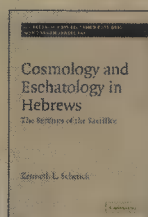
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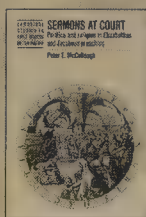
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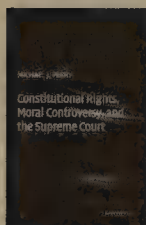
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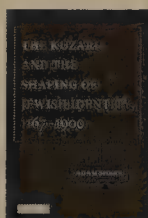
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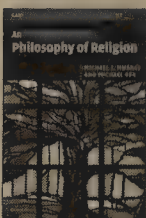
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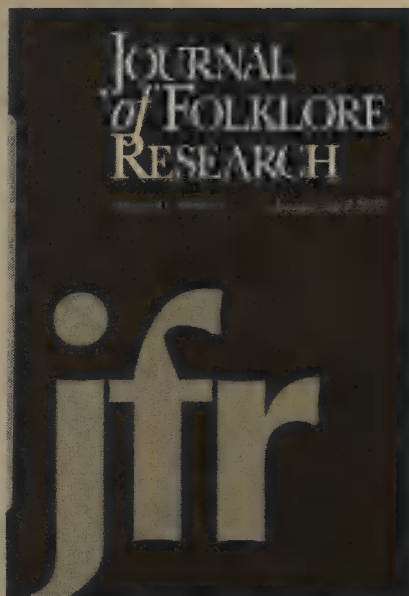


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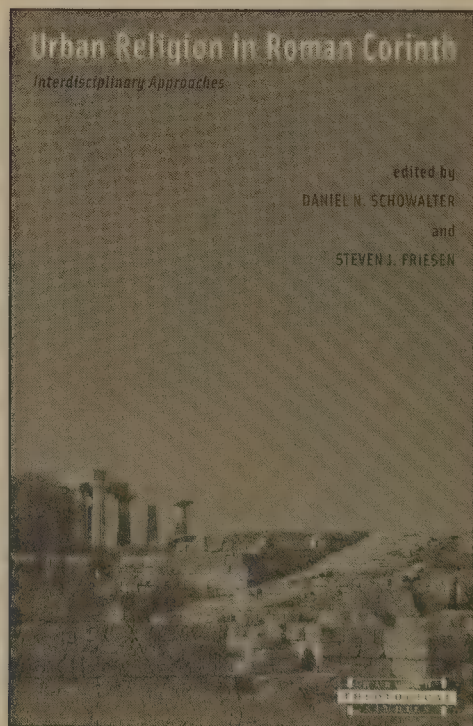
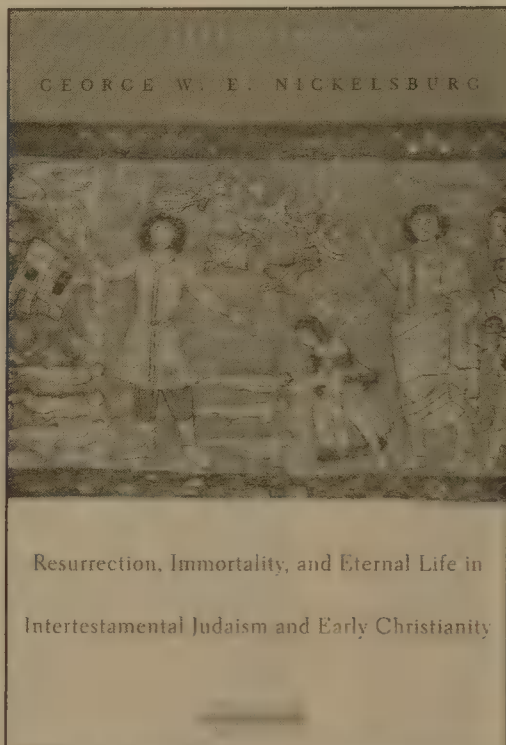
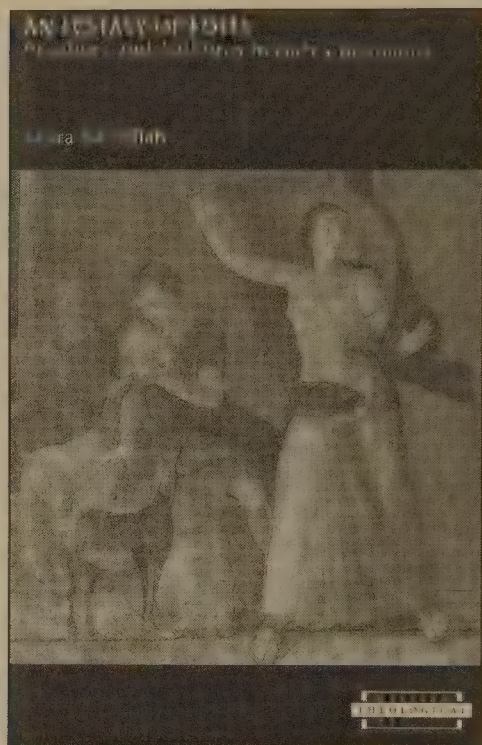
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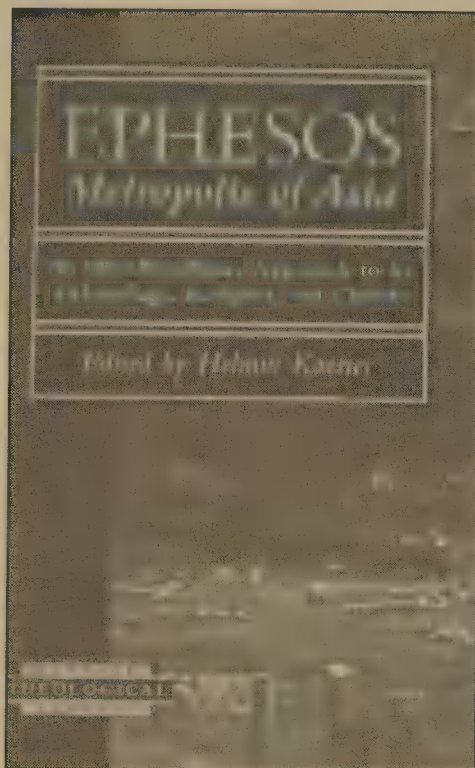
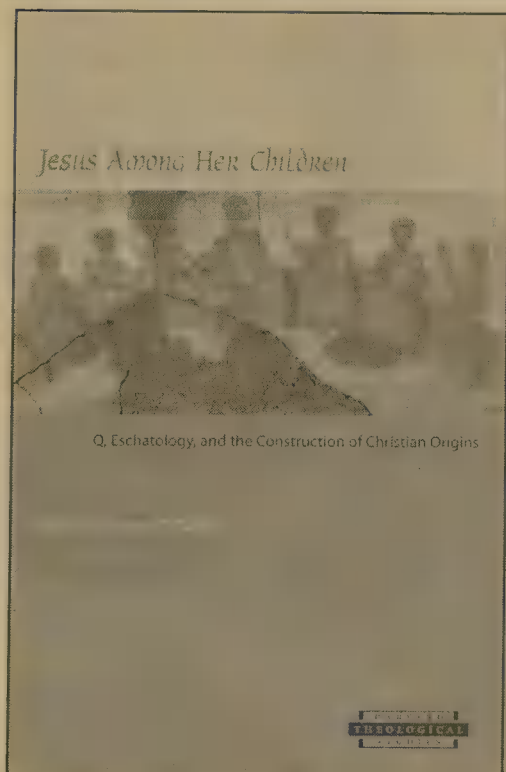
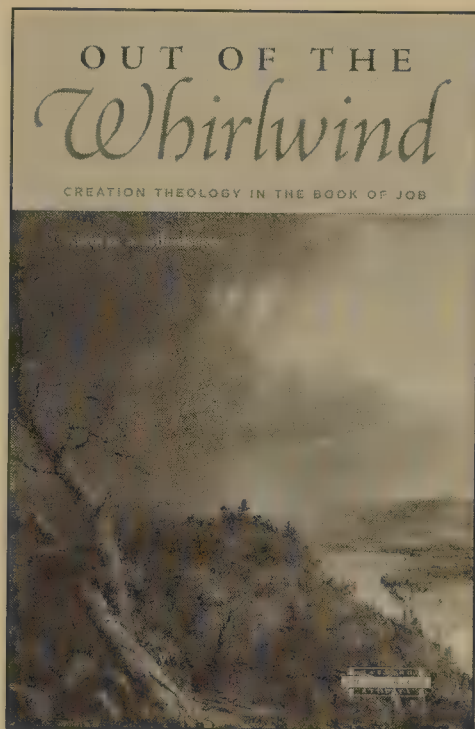
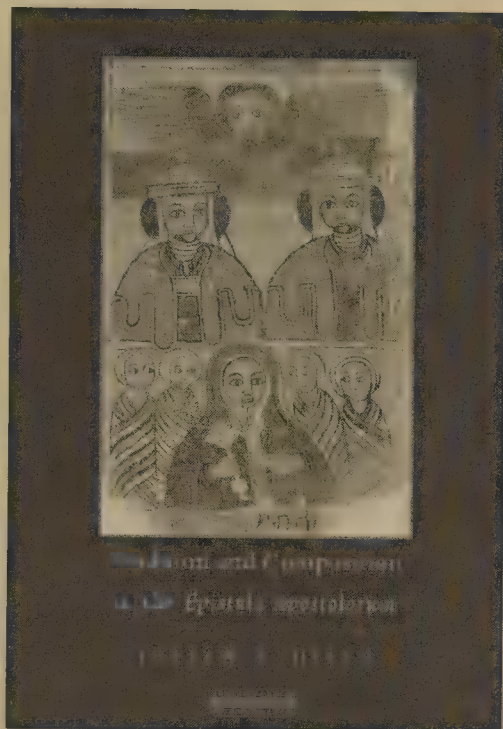
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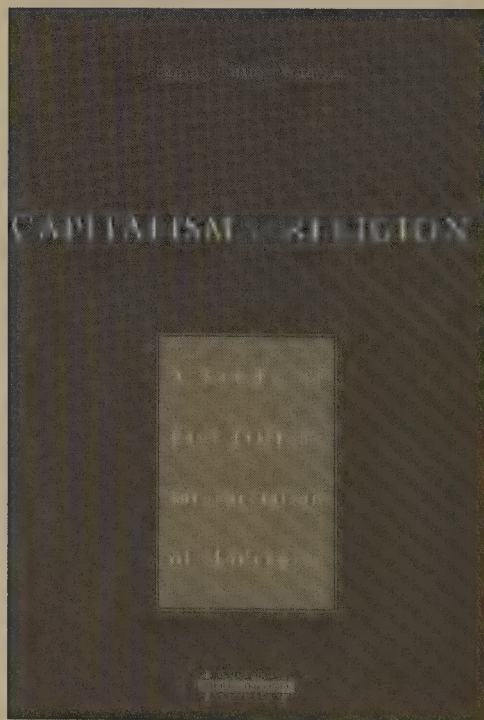
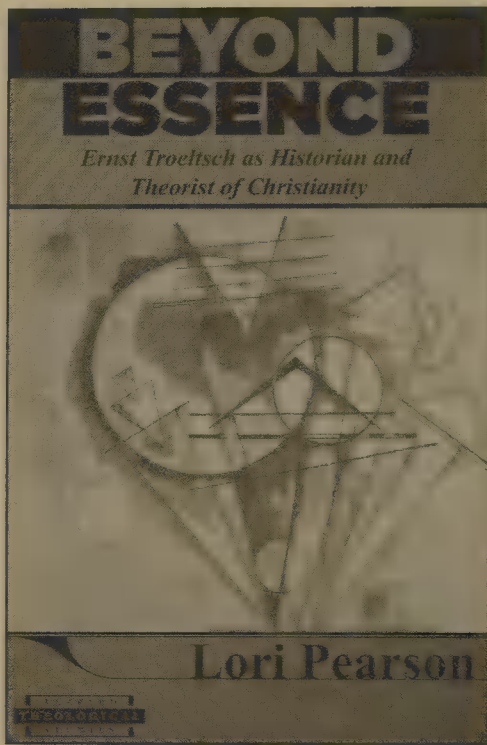
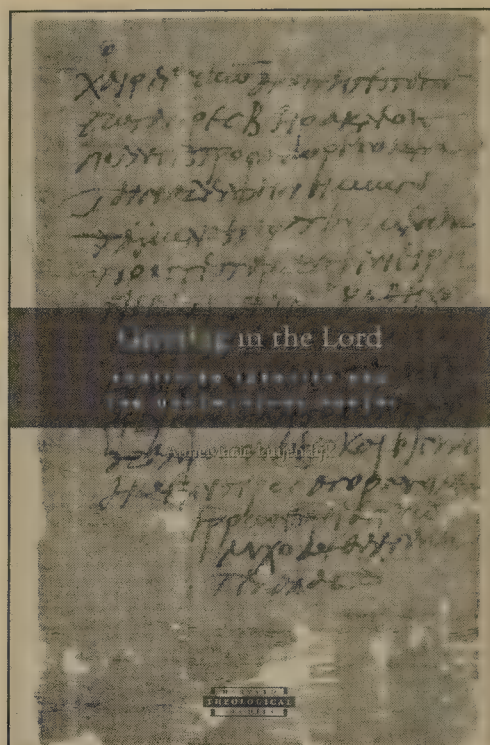
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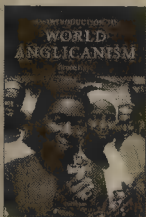


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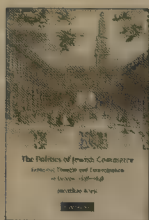
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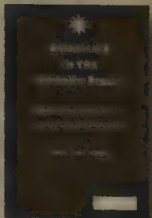


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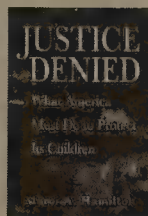


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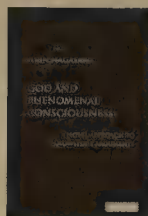


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